



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
Third Session

Alberta Hansard

Wednesday evening, February 23, 2022

Day 2

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 30th Legislature
Third Session

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Ceci, Joe, Calgary-Buffalo (NDP)
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Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South (Ind)
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Dreeshen, Devin, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (UC)
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Turton, Searle, Spruce Grove-Stony Plain (UC)
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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, February 23, 2022

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

The Deputy Speaker: Good evening, hon. members. Please be seated.

Government Motions

Emergencies Act

10. Mr. Kenney moved on behalf of Mr. Jason Nixon:
Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly
- (a) condemn the unnecessary invocation of the Emergencies Act by the government of Canada as the Assembly is of the view that this is a measure which infringes upon the constitutionally guaranteed rights of Albertans and all Canadians, including the right to due process and natural justice;
 - (b) is of the view that the government of Canada has failed to demonstrate that the present circumstances meet the threshold that the law requires to invoke the Emergencies Act and that, as demonstrated in Alberta, governments and law enforcement agencies already have adequate authority and resources to end illegal blockades and restore order; and
 - (c) is further of the view that this invocation of the Emergencies Act constitutes an unnecessary intrusion into provincial jurisdiction under the Constitution of Canada.

[Debate adjourned: February 23]

The Deputy Speaker: Sorry. The hon. Member for Peace River is the first to catch my eye.

Mr. Williams: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I'm very glad to rise on Government Motion 10 tonight. It's an interesting circumstance we find ourselves in. This morning the government of Alberta had written a motion we planned to debate. By this afternoon the federal government had decided to reverse course on the implementation of the Emergencies Act.

Now, I wanted to talk a bit, before we get into the content of my concern, about national institutions. Institutions have many rules, and they take many different forms. But two important criteria that I believe institutions must have, whether it be the family as the foundational building block of our society, as the most fundamental institution, or about Parliament itself and cabinet and the Constitution which we have inherited from tradition that came before: every single institution needs to have wherewithal, needs to have some ability to exist beyond the manifestation of one individual or one time in one place that exists over time, continuing to keep a culture and a sense and a purpose and, secondly, institutions must be formative. These institutions must be able to have people and society and groups enter one way and come out another.

That's why families are the most fundamental institutions. Children go in blind and ignorant to the world outside of them; they come out, hopefully, mature, responsible children, graduating from their home, out of their parents', to raise their own families. We respect the institution of the military for a reason. These impressionable young men and women go in; they come out with a set of virtue and discipline, able to accomplish something greater than they did before. Our schools are institutions that do this.

Well, it's also true of our national political institutions, our constitutional institutions, that they have existence over time. Whether or not one Prime Minister does something one day or another, the institution needs to still last past an individual, past an individual government, and it needs to be formative.

My concern right now, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that the institutions that we've inherited are being eroded by the current federal government, and that's no small matter. These institutions are the institutions that fundamentally, when all is said and done, guarantee civil liberties, guarantee the ability to have solidarity as a collective society to accomplish something greater than we could as individuals. It's these institutions that protect us from the tyranny of a majority or tyranny of a dictator, tyranny of any kind, being imposed upon us. These institutions are foundational and fundamental to who we are as Canadians.

Our institutions are not American institutions; they're Canadian. They're decidedly, distinctively, uniquely, descriptively Canadian. My fear is that what is happening right now, what we saw today from the start to the end, is a grave blow to the institution of the rule of law, a grave blow to the credibility of the institution of the government, the executive itself, and to the legitimacy of Parliament. Now let me explain, Madam Deputy Speaker, why I think it's so concerning.

The Emergencies Act is, by definition, not meant to be used in normal times. It must be extraordinary measures. If normal means could deal with it, it must, as the Premier pointed out in his opening speech this afternoon, and should be dealt with with the laws that we have on hand. It's interesting to note that in Alberta the illegal activity going on at the Coutts border crossing was dealt with within the law, without needing to go into what used to be the War Measures Act, now in its manifestation the Emergencies Act. It must be reserved for extraordinary circumstances. If ordinary circumstances could deal with it, they ought to. The truth is, Madam Deputy Speaker, that they did and could in Alberta and in B.C. and in Ontario. I have no idea why the federal government and cabinet believed it was necessary to implement the Emergencies Act. I think they did not meet that standard.

But that's not what I'm focusing on tonight. What I want to focus on tonight is the fact that they went through this, and within the seven days legally required, according to the act they must vote on it within Parliament. Parliament, Madam Deputy Speaker, as everyone knows here as a member of the Legislature, is given the authority of the sovereign, represented by our Mace, just like the Mace in Ottawa, to govern. That Mace used to be a weapon. It has the authority of the monopoly of violence. Folks don't pay their taxes? Folks don't follow the rules? Folks want to break the law? We will use that authority to maintain civil order, to maintain ordered liberty in our society. Now, if we abuse the power that we get from our sovereign, Her Majesty the Queen, and her vice-regal, our Lieutenant Governor, as we saw here just yesterday, or the Governor General in Ottawa, then that severely damages the credibility of this as a body.

Let's be clear. What the federal government did, under Justin Trudeau, is implement an extraordinary, unprecedented implementation of an act reserved for situations of terrorist attacks, wars, other dramatic situations because there was a political group protesting against his preferred political direction; froze bank accounts of hundreds, it seems, average citizens who politically opposed; and then decided without allowing the vote to continue through Parliament. Parliament is not just the House of Commons, as you know; it's a bicameral system in Ottawa. The commons themselves voted; the Senate had not.

Before that vote could happen to ratify the use of these extraordinary measures, taking away civil liberties, taking away the

right to have property – Madam Deputy Speaker, the right to have property is fundamental to the right to have a conscience, to the right to have a personal life, the separation between public and private, for families to organize, civil society to be able to move forward. The right to have property is instrumental to the right to be able to protest. If protesters are allowed to gather but are not allowed to control their own bank accounts, not allowed to control their own vehicles, then that's not much of a political protest. It's a pyrrhic protest. It's not real in a meaningful sense in terms of opposition to a government.

Inherent in our system is to be able to oppose a government. I just visited a protest yesterday, Madam Deputy Speaker, here in front of our Legislature Building. I was very glad that our government has done nothing so draconian, dramatic, and tyrannical in its nature as to limit their ability to protest by taking away their own private property, their means of being able to achieve that end and make that voice heard. Now we're in a spot where the federal government has implemented, done its deed, and not allowed the voice of the people, the ultimate sovereign authority, the authority that grants cabinet its own authority, the Parliament, to speak on it.

Now, I do not know the answer to the question I'm about to ask, but I wonder if it was true that the Senate was going to vote against Justin Trudeau's, you know, radical implementation of this act. If that is the case, it makes this all the more nefarious, Madam Deputy Speaker. The fact that the government of Canada, the executive that is meant to be there to serve the people, circumvented Parliament in the most extraordinary use of government powers that the government of Canada has used in decades, probably since Trudeau Sr. implemented the War Measures Act in the FLQ crisis – I think it is absolutely concerning, no matter what your political affiliation, that this happened.

I know that members opposite are highly politically motivated when it comes to issues that we would differ on. If the shoe was on the other foot, would they be rising making speeches? I should hope so, but I would as well. I would be there with them saying that the government of Canada under a Conservative government, hypothetically, that would implement the Emergencies Act without a ratification after they had done the work of clearing any kind of protest, without allowing Parliament to have voted to support it – no matter who the group is, that is fundamental to who we are as a society.

I understand, just as I know any rational Canadian would, that if it can be done to me or can be done to you, it can be done to them as well. What would be the categorical difference if there were a radical environmentalist group blocking a pipeline? There needs to be consistent application of the rule of law. That is inherent in the rule of law, predictability, as a criterion for the rule of law to work.

This is why I opened my speech talking about national institutions, because they are increasingly broken. They're broken because the west feels left out; equalization doesn't seem fair. They're broken because we see situations like this, where the credibility of the media has gone out the window for many people sitting on the right side of the aisle, where the credibility of Trudeau and his cabinet has been lost. But now increasingly there's a concern that Parliament itself, the body meant to be the representative of the people and to hold the cabinet accountable, is no longer able to do its job. That fundamentally, Madam Deputy Speaker, is striking at the heart of who we are as a democracy. Those individuals who sit around the cabinet table in Ottawa, who are members of Trudeau's cabinet, ought to be terrified of what they bring.

I think, in my closing comment, of one of my favourite pieces of media. I think it was a 1966 film, *A Man for All Seasons*, where the chancellor of England, Sir Thomas More, found himself in an

awkward position with his liege lord, King Henry VIII. Everyone knows the history of King Henry VIII. There's an important moment articulated by Thomas More, where he would give the devil the protection of law, arguing against his new-found son-in-law. The reason he would give the devil the protection of the rule of law is because once you've gone and cut down every tree in the land and every law – not God's law; man's law – then where will you have to hide when the winds of the devil and evil blow against you? You've cut down all the trees. It's a plain. It just comes right back at you.

7:40

The law is there for the protection of everyone, man's law that we implement here, that the Constitution guarantees. The consistency of the rule of law is inherent in allowing any function of the law to work. If it seemed to be inconsistent in the most dramatic and necessary of times, it will not have credibility in the smallest of times either. This collapse and trust in the rule of law, that we've seen throughout this COVID pandemic, has maybe climaxed for many Canadians and Albertans in this moment, where we see Justin Trudeau's cabinet taking the rule of law and fiddling with it, toying with it, twisting it into contortions to fit his political purpose and ends.

That, Madam Deputy Speaker, is why we must guarantee the rule of law, why we must all stand regardless of political affiliation or how much you sympathize or don't with the truckers or any protest. If we give this up – this – it's all for naught. It serves no end and serves no purpose. It doesn't have any purpose at all if we do not agree that there is consistency in that application. What Justin Trudeau has done by circumventing the ability for the Senate, the full Parliament to vote on the Emergencies Act and its implementation for a so-called national crisis is shameful. More than shameful; it's scary.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Central Peace-Notley.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I rise today to speak to Government Motion 10. I considered asking for an emergency debate on this issue but wanted to make sure there would be some action that came as a result of our debate here. With emergency debate there isn't any motion or any action that comes of it.

That's why we announced by press release that I'd be bringing forward a motion in the Assembly at the earliest opportunity, which is today. Interestingly enough, the Premier, three hours later, tweeted out that he would also be bringing forward a motion in the Legislature regarding this issue. Then we sent a letter to the Premier on February 18 regarding a number of issues with the Emergencies Act, including it violating the rights of Alberta jurisdiction and suggesting that the Alberta government take specific actions to protect Albertans' rights. The following day, on February 19, the Premier, again by tweet, shared a video where he mentions provincial jurisdiction. Now, I truly appreciate the Premier following our lead on this issue, though Albertans may be more impressed if he communicated to them on a platform other than Twitter. Regardless, the most important thing is that we are here today discussing this important issue.

I want to point out that I was the only MLA in this House to travel with the convoy to Ottawa and spend two days on Parliament Hill at the rally. I did that to see first-hand what was happening there and so I could talk to people and get a feeling and understanding of how they felt and what they were asking for. I was sure glad I did. On the way there my wife described the trip as a 14-hour-a-day parade, where people lined the streets, people came out on the

highways to wave their flags and cheer on the convoy as it went by. There was so much joy. There was so much pride. There was so much patriotism.

Now, what happened is that after two days on Parliament Hill at the rally I sat in a home in Ontario listening to the news. I didn't recognize what I'd seen on TV. I thought maybe it was at a different rally. I thought maybe there was something else going on. The Prime Minister's comments that day were filled with hate. He name-called. He made horrific accusations. A man that can't remember how many times he dressed in blackface accused hundreds of thousands of people of being racist. It was deplorable. It was disgusting. At that time the media called me from Alberta here wondering what I'd seen. I guess they didn't like what I said about how the media reported the events because they didn't use any of my quotes in the article the next day. The only hate I saw or heard was from our Prime Minister.

I was there. I never saw the Prime Minister there. I never saw the mayor of Ottawa there. I didn't see the NDP leader there either. I was there. I got to see and feel what was happening on the ground there; they didn't, but they all had an opinion afterwards. That was just horrible to see, what those people said about that event.

So how did we get here? How did we get to this point where we have a Prime Minister invoke the Emergencies Act? All of this was caused by the Prime Minister when he demanded vaccines instead of testing for truckers crossing the border, riding alone in their trucks. There is not a lonelier occupation than a truck driver. This is a Prime Minister that called them heroes in the past. Those were just words full of hypocrisy. The Prime Minister's vaccine mandate was a border blockade by policy. It restricted thousands of truckers from hauling goods across the border. That, by definition, is a blockade. Unvaccinated truckers go from Victoria to St. John's, from Inuvik to Coutts, but for some reason beyond my understanding the piece of highway between Coutts and Sweetgrass and other similar pieces of highway across Canada are a no-go zone unless they are vaccinated. A negative test was not good enough.

There are consequences to policies. We see that here with an emergency order that was brought forward by that Prime Minister. The pains of Canadians were caused by the Prime Minister. His response was to lash out viciously and use the media to try to portray a change of events, events that didn't take place. Now, the problem is that we in Alberta are in no position to resist these draconian measures. We had a Fair Deal Panel report, that's been out for almost two years now. I was there at the Fair Deal Panel meetings. I heard Albertans. I know what the people were saying. But now, after almost three years of this government being in power, nothing.

This Premier has done nothing but talk. We expected from this government a bulldog towards Ottawa, but in fact we got a lapdog. Seizing bank accounts: banks are seeing their accounts drained from lack of trust. That's not good for our economy. We have the Alberta Treasury Branch in Alberta. Why can't we push back on this federal intrusion? But we see nothing from this Premier. I even heard a federal Liberal talking about this on the news the other day, talking about: how do we get tourism back in Canada? Well, I tell you one thing: this doesn't help. This is very hurtful. People around the world are looking at this situation that we're in and they're looking at it with disappointment and dismay. We had the federal NDP leader support this Emergencies Act and then go on to say: oh, except maybe Quebec and then, like, the protesters that I support; we wouldn't want to use that on them. I mean, that's pure hypocrisy.

Now, I know the Premier never asked the Prime Minister to invoke the Emergencies Act, but it appears there's a great comfortableness between the Premier and the Prime Minister.

There is no daylight in between them until Albertans respond. Then he answers with words. No action, just words. His heart is not in it. His heart is on winning the leadership review. That's it. As many of the members of this Assembly are certainly aware, we are dealing with a Prime Minister who is clearly acting in bad faith. The federal government did not need these powers to clear blockades or break up rallies. They're using these powers to seize bank accounts, confiscate property, and punish Canadian citizens who do not break a single Canadian law other than to have a different ideology than the Prime Minister. They are doing all of this without due process.

It also appears that the government is using the sweeping powers it has granted itself to retroactively search out justification for invoking these powers in the first place. Justin Trudeau was searching Canadians' private financial records, desperately trying to justify his arrogant and authoritarian overreach. This is not acceptable. The blockades are gone and the rallies have ended, yet police and government officials continue to threaten Canadians who choose to exercise their constitutionally protected right to support and take part in peaceful protests. Obviously, this is about ideology and crushing ideology that doesn't align with the Prime Minister's.

Using the Emergencies Act is an affront to the Constitution of Canada, including the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Without the rights and freedoms delineated in the Charter, things like freedom of expression, freedom of association, and freedom of religion, Canada ceases to be Canada. By invoking far-reaching emergency powers, the Prime Minister has proven himself to be everything that the freedom convoy participants travelled thousands of kilometres to protest against. The question before this Assembly is: what are we going to do about it? We need to denounce Justin Trudeau's authoritarian imposition of the Emergencies Act and call for it to never happen again. The Government House Leader has offered up a motion on this matter, one that we're discussing right now, that denounces Trudeau's use of the Emergencies Act.

7:50

Let me be clear. Denouncing it is not enough; we must act. Albertans are sick and tired of this Premier's elbow-bump diplomacy with Trudeau. This is a time for taking real action to defend Albertans. Unfortunately, from the beginning this government has failed to grasp the urgency of the situation. The fact that the government put the throne speech ahead of passing this motion is evidence of how seriously they're taking this situation.

The government has indicated it will begin a legal challenge against the imposition of the Emergencies Act. The hypocrisy of this government, under the leadership of this Premier, officially requesting help from Justin Trudeau in ways that the Emergencies Act would facilitate and then suing the federal government for passing legislation to facilitate that help: it is an astounding display of hypocrisy. That has made the Premier the laughingstock of the Canadian Parliament. Again, the Premier didn't ask for the Emergencies Act, but he sure seems to be willing to use it when it suits him.

We have asked for debates in this House regarding the emergency powers that the Premier invoked under the Public Health Act. This Premier has invoked vaccine mandates that have caused job losses, livelihoods to be lost, and now this Premier has the audacity to speak against the Prime Minister's mandates in this Emergencies Act. There have been rallies across Alberta against the Premier's mandates also. At least the feds had a chance to vote on it. We never had that chance in this House. It appears that the Prime Minister believes in democracy more than the Premier does. I agree that this is necessary, but it won't help the lives and livelihoods of Albertans

who are having their assets frozen and property seized now, in real time.

The government must immediately take steps to protect and defend Albertans from the long arm of Trudeau's authoritarian government. The government of Alberta can and must exercise its jurisdiction in several key areas. First, ATB Financial is a Crown corporation wholly owned by the province. Steps must be taken to prevent seizure of account holders' assets. Secondly, the province regulates vehicle registration and insurance. Steps must be taken to prevent the cancellation of registration and insurance of Albertan vehicles. Thirdly, the province has a duty to defend Albertans' property rights. Any attempt by the federal government to continue to seize or conscript Albertans' property must be opposed and prevented.

Of course, I'm open to any and all other potential ideas for protecting Albertans. However, simply denouncing the federal government while taking no action to defend Albertans is not acceptable. This is the coward's way out.

Thank you.

Ms Phillips: Both overpolicing and underpolicing are lethal to our civil liberties. I may be alone in this House and maybe even in terms of parliamentarians in terms of the depth and breadth of the extent to which I have been a target and a victim of overbroad police powers and abuse of authority. I certainly have felt alone often.

This has been recognized by both parties, on both sides of the House, the Premier, and the Attorney General. As someone who has been surreptitiously photographed, unlawfully surveilled, all by in-uniform officers – those are agreed-to facts – as someone who has had officers make memes of me on work time and with work resources that have been described to media as toxic, humiliating, and offensive, as someone who has had their records unlawfully accessed by police, all at the hands of the Lethbridge Police Service, all to do with my political affiliation and daring to exercise my basic democratic rights under section 3 of the Charter, I cling tightly to my civil liberties. I am fundamentally, ca-te-flippin'-gorically uninterested in broadening state powers over the individual any more than absolutely necessary.

I have always held a more civil libertarian view in terms of the social democratic family, but my view of state authority has only been cemented by my own experience of years of documented intimidation – attempted intimidation: they did not succeed, Madam Speaker – and harassment by armed agents of the Crown. In fact, the first lines of my last appeal submission to the Law Enforcement Review Board quotes the *R. v. Mann* 2004 Supreme Court decision:

Absent a law to the contrary, individuals are free to do as they please. By contrast, the police (and more broadly, the state) may act only to the extent that they are empowered to do so by law. The vibrancy of a democracy is apparent by how wisely it navigates through those critical junctures where state action intersects with, and threatens to impinge upon, individual liberties.

By February 1 we were at such a critical juncture that the Supreme Court wrote about in that decision.

On the weekend of January 28 to 30 southern Albertans were no longer able to exercise their right to peaceful enjoyment of property. They were no longer able to engage in trade and commerce; \$44 million a day was being stolen from them by the blockade at Coutts. The week of February 1 I received e-mails from families close to the blockades in southern Alberta. I will not give any more identifying details than that because people are terrified. Their e-mails said that their kids weren't going to school, that their groceries were not being bought, that folks were not going to work.

Southern Alberta farmers texted me concerned about the underpolicing happening at the border. Nothing was being done, nothing at all.

Economic Development Lethbridge spoke out publicly during that first week, indicating that shifts were beginning to be cancelled at the plants of some of their members. Product from manufacturers in the Lethbridge industrial park was piling up as trucks could not be booked. On the Sunday a UCP MLA visited the blockade. On the Monday we should have had a clear indication, two or three days into this thing, from the province about what they were doing to clear the blockade. Twenty-four hours of closure of an international boundary should have been enough. It was a clear matter of national security by this point, and that should have been enough for a former Minister of National Defence, who is the Premier, to take that oath for public order seriously. By midday on the first Monday of the blockade the province ought to have been in front of a judge seeking an injunction. Later that day we should have had a Premier who treated this crisis as the national security risk that it is and an indication of any localized state of emergency powers that cabinet could invoke.

There should have been an indication of any ministerial orders on commercial or farm vehicle licensing that were imminent, any potential orders in council that cabinet was considering with respect to commercial or farm vehicle insurance policies, and even any statutory measures that they were examining. There should have been resolute leadership at the helm. There should have been a willingness to recall the Legislature early if statutory changes to licensing or insurance were required. There should have been a clear indication that the province was examining civil liability for the operators of the large equipment that was being used for the blockade and causing millions of dollars of harm at the border.

All of this should have been communicated swiftly: break the law, and there will be consequences. It's not difficult. Certainly, anyone using civil disobedience for the aims of social change understands this chain of consequences and is prepared for it, and that should have been day 1 of the occupation of Coutts. That's what it should have looked like, but the consequences never came. There were no consequences on day 2. There were no consequences on day 3. There was no indication that there was a plan, but there was UCP action. Let me explain.

After day 1 of the occupation, after the war memorial was urinated on, after the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was danced on, after a homeless person was beat up, after a shelter was threatened for not giving the occupiers food, after residents were subjected to their first 24 hours of three weeks of street harassment and sonic torture, after all of the flags and the conspiracy theories about globalism, after all of that, there was UCP action. One of them went to Coutts and supported the occupation of Ottawa. They made excuses. They cherry-picked from the Charter, and they did not care about any of the harm they caused.

Instead, it was as if the terrorized people of Coutts and Milk River did not even exist. It was as if the \$44 million, the day of economic theft by the blockade, did not exist. It was as if the cattle producers awaiting live cattle imports or those waiting to ship boxed beef south did not exist. It was as if the manufacturers who couldn't book trucks or had to cancel shipping contracts out of the U.S. ports did not exist. It was as if this was simply a minor skirmish, a disagreement over a few parking spots, not a massive national security crisis. Can you imagine, my fellow Albertans, what would have happened if a border blockade had occurred in the aftermath of 9/11?

They blockaded a border not for an hour, not for a day. Instead, it was left to build, to fester, to grow into, as the Hip once sang, Gord Downie of the Tragically Hip, "something we could no longer

contain.” Given that this was a Canada-wide crisis, Madam Speaker, I’ll lean in on one of our best poets for some inspiration here. After a few days it became clear that the border blockades were not going anywhere and that the poor behaviour was just getting worse. This was the time when grown adults should have said to themselves, to quote Gord Downie from the same song again: this is horrific; I’m embarrassed; I don’t endorse that; I don’t want this.

They did nothing of the sort. They shamelessly followed lawlessness, encouraged it, feted it, held it up as an expression of our values when it is the opposite. The blockade then spread. The highway was blocked off at the Nobleford roundabout. The highway was blocked south of Fort Macleod, the road onto the Blood reserve, with two school buses of children waiting in the February cold. For what? The overthrow of the government? The Governor General to get back to people on their e-mails? It is here where we pause on the stated objective of the blockades because their stated motivations have been flattened and ironed out of the narrative given as they are quite unsavoury.

8:00

The blockade organizers are calling, in the first instance, for interference in the decisions of private companies to mandate that private capital capitulate to their interpretation of occupational health and safety and an end to vaccine requirements for business. The blockade organizers are calling for removal of vaccine requirements in municipal facilities. Finally, perhaps parenthetically, they are calling on the Canadian government to unilaterally renege on a cross-border agreement with the Biden administration.

The blockade organizers, in their manifesto, also are calling for the removal of the currently constituted House of Commons, the suspension of its authority to pass, amend, and review legislation, and the replacement of our elected Members of Parliament with a committee of self-selected Facebook uncles. These were the stated terms of negotiation. Somewhat parenthetically as well, the organizers at Coutts threw in some demands of the provincial government. By the end of the first week they had achieved those goals because the Premier capitulated, a hostage at his own cabinet table. But it didn’t matter because it wasn’t ever really about the vaccines, was it? The Coutts occupation remained.

The blockade organizers do not take any responsibility for the economic harm they have caused. None at all. I listened to the main Coutts organizer in a radio interview. He did not express any sympathy for the almost billion dollars of economic damage or the fear experienced by the residents of southern Alberta, those parents who have worked hard to keep it all together during the pandemic, who have behaved responsibly, got vaccinated, and resisted the urge to fall down an antiscience, antivaccine disinformation rabbit hole.

All of this was greeted by capitulation from our Premier. He removed the vaccine requirements for restaurants and other public spaces at midnight. Was it the right decision? It could have been, but we don’t know. They have not released any evidence that it was the correct decision. I would be happy to see the evidence, but it disappeared like Cinderella at midnight due to the wish casting of a fairy tale that antivaccine, antigovernment insurrectionists can be appeased in this matter. They cannot. They were not. The blockade continued.

It is about this time, it appears, that far-right extremists began running stockpiles of weapons to the border. It’s not entirely possible for this to have happened on day one if the organizers are to be believed that they had no knowledge of this new group’s plans. The guns came primarily from two people in Lethbridge, and their stated purpose was to kill police officers, officers who would

have been empowered to clear out the blockade on day one had the province shown some leadership. The guns came from Lethbridge, from behind doors that I could easily have knocked on. They came from people with very dangerous ties to the far right, the Diagonal movement, a white supremacist accelerationist movement. We know about these ties from the Canadian Anti-Hate Network. The guns came from doors that my canvassers could have easily knocked on. They came from radicalized people who live next door.

Now, I pause for a moment to take on a spurious line of reasoning that I have heard the Premier indulge in, that he cannot direct police. Okay. We understand that: not directly. Executive Council cannot ask law enforcement to target an individual or even a group. Executive Council can talk to a police chief about public safety and does. Executive Council can talk to them about resources. They can’t ask them to do one specific thing, like interfere in one person’s proceedings, but Executive Council is well within its rights to ask questions of or give direction to and solicit advice from police services. There are informal discussions for this and formal consultation forums. More formally, cabinet can direct policing standards. That’s in the Police Act.

Here’s a quote from Bill Sweeney, the director of law enforcement, on Tuesday, April 6, 2021, on the topic of directing police services. “We’ve had many conversations with the chiefs and authorized employers where we were encouraging a measured approach to enforcement.” He’s talking here about public health orders. “Given that the pandemic is a rather unique situation for all of us . . . the intent was to inform, to educate, to warn, and, only as a last resort, to charge. That was an approach we encouraged . . .” That’s a quote.

Now, as I have demonstrated, the provincial government did not undertake any of its options, not one. Not an injunction. Not the many administrative penalties that could have been levied. No additional resources were sent to the border. In other words, we live in a province that actively abdicated its responsibilities and vacated its own jurisdiction over public order.

We come to the Emergencies Act. After the Coutts insurrectionists were left to set up shop and their rot was allowed to spread, it is quite possible that intelligence agencies had information that other cells were doing the same. It was not at all clear that anything was going to happen in Manitoba at Emerson or even at the Ambassador Bridge. Conservative provincial governments were dithering there, too.

In all those instances you had provinces who either did not want to or could not or felt they would not appropriately enforce the Traffic Safety Act, and the federal government had its own jurisdictional responsibility for trade and commerce, border security, not to mention firearms, intelligence services, and counterterrorism to uphold. I, too, was extremely concerned – I am still – about the Emergencies Act until I read the perspective of Perrin Beatty, one of the Conservative framers of the act, and Ed Broadbent, the NDP opposition leader at the time, who voted against the War Measures Act but whose caucus brought in dozens of thoughtful amendments to the Emergencies Act in the 1980s in order to ensure that it does not inappropriately infringe on our fundamental freedoms.

Now, I share the Premier’s reticence on section 8. I share his reticence on section 7. I have had those rights infringed upon, Madam Speaker, and I do not want to live in a country where that is the norm.

I wholly support any of the occupiers charged under the Emergencies Act to vociferously defend their Charter rights, too. But this was less about the Emergencies Act and our Charter rights and more about jurisdiction. In the end, it was the requirement for better integration of the Ambassador Bridge, a more coherent antiterrorism approach, and the clearing of the sonic torture and

systemic harassment of the residents of Ottawa that were the impetus for this act.

There was the problem of FINTRAC not capturing crypto and crowdfunding technology, an oversight that I believe Conservatives would enthusiastically support redress for if it concerned jihadi terrorist threats but evidently not if it concerns those who would shut down our economy, a strange double standard for them to indulge. Regardless, it is appropriate for FINTRAC to be able to capture those cross-border transactions and those new technologies, and it is doubly appropriate when there is evidence of cross-border flows of money to finance the blockading of our borders and to shut down and paralyze our capital city.

Even those actions, though, should be challenged and reviewed, and I am pleased that Parliament will be doing so. I actually don't mind the Premier's desire for a legal review to best flesh out how his inaction led to the Emergencies Act. I would welcome an inquiry by a judge to examine all of the evidence and why this province did not uphold its constitutional responsibilities to provide local policing and take all available public safety measures in order to ensure peace, order, and good government.

I welcome an articulation of part 1 in this context. What are the reasonable limits to federal powers when provinces simply refuse to govern because they are in the midst of a political crisis that they believe forces them to capitulate to an armed minority of people?

I conclude my comments with some thoughts on the future of liberal democracy, and I am not particularly hopeful, in particular because I am seeing Conservatives falling into two camps. [Ms Phillips' speaking time expired]

The Deputy Speaker: Apologies, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to speak in favour of Motion 10, which reads:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly

- (a) condemn the unnecessary invocation of the Emergencies Act by the government of Canada as the Assembly is of the view that this is a measure which infringes upon the constitutionally guaranteed rights of Albertans and all Canadians, including the right to due process and natural justice;
- (b) is of the view that the government of Canada has failed to demonstrate that the present circumstances meet the threshold that the law requires to invoke the Emergencies Act and that, as demonstrated in Alberta, governments and law enforcement agencies already have adequate authority and resources to end illegal blockades and restore order; and
- (c) is further of the view that this invocation of the Emergencies Act constitutes an unnecessary intrusion into provincial jurisdiction under the Constitution of Canada.

Madam Speaker, the right to protest is a fundamental freedom in any democracy. It is what sets us apart from the dictatorships of the world. Three weeks ago many Canadians decided to take a stand against vaccine mandates and other measures they feel violate their freedoms. Everyone is entitled to their beliefs, and whether or not we agree with the position, it is that person's right to peacefully protest, and this right must be upheld.

These protests took place at many different locations in the country. It caused a shutdown of roads in Ottawa's downtown core and allowed blockades at vital border crossings such as the Ambassador Bridge from Windsor to Detroit and the Coutts border crossing here in Alberta. Let me be clear that we do not support the blockage of vital transportation and infrastructure. In fact, our government passed Bill 1, the Critical Infrastructure Defence Act,

in order to make blockades illegal if they can cause significant public safety, socioeconomic, or environmental consequences.

8:10

We all know that the Prime Minister has shown a willingness time and time again to meet with many controversial people of his liking – and this includes the likes of Joshua Boyle – yet he is unwilling to hear and meet with Canadians who hold different viewpoints, just like his refusal to meet with the truckers. Instead, he went hiding for days.

Madam Speaker, when the Prime Minister finally did emerge, he decided that it was necessary to invoke the Emergencies Act, for the first time in Canadian history, to deal with the protesters. It does not matter that the Prime Minister has revoked the Emergencies Act this afternoon; he should have never invoked it to begin with. For the most part these protesters were peaceful and were only taking advantage of their right to protest government actions that they did not agree with.

The police have always had the tools to deal with the unlawful protesters and are responsible for their own operational decisions. We have demonstrated in Alberta that we have provincial law enforcement agencies which are able to deal with these illegal blockades without extraordinary federal powers to seize assets. The Emergencies Act added no relevant additional powers or resources to deal with these blockades. In fact, Madam Speaker, the protests had been cleared from Coutts and the Ambassador Bridge in Ottawa. Instead, the Emergencies Act was a heavy-handed approach aimed at punishing the protesters.

The original intent of the Emergencies Act was to give the federal government additional resources to deal with dire national emergencies. This could be instances of war or domestic terrorism. Madam Speaker, I think we all can agree that these protests did not represent the original intent of the act against threats to our country. Using this act to deal with the most peaceful protesters was a heavy-handed overreach which was no longer needed since the blockades had been cleared.

For all these reasons, the Prime Minister was forced to change course due to the outcry of many Canadians who were opposed to the act. For these reasons, I'm willing to vote in favour of the motion to condemn the unnecessary invocation of the Emergencies Act by the government of Canada and encourage all members of this House to do so. Let's stand up and support Canadians' right to a peaceful protest.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning.

Ms Sweet: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. This is a government that claims to care about the economy, that claims it understands rural Alberta, that it understands agriculture and how we get food from our farmers to our kitchen tables, yet when the people of rural Alberta needed the Premier to lead, he hid in the United States while his Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Economic Development was silent. The Premier sat on his hands for more than two weeks while the Coutts border crossing, Alberta's only 24-hour border crossing and the only Alberta crossing that allows live animals to pass through, was blocked. Albertans know how damaging this was for Alberta's economy. The UCP know how damaging it was to the economy. The ministers knew exactly how damaging it was going to be to our economy, yet they did nothing.

The UCP, this government, made a choice to choose the party voting base over the livelihoods of farmers and our agricultural producers. This government's divisive politics are hurting our rural

communities. The government is asking for leadership from the federal government, yet they've shown none themselves.

The fact that I'm standing here talking about the Emergencies Act, when the federal government today announced that it would no longer be used, is clearly a demonstration of this UCP's political stunts. We shouldn't be doing this, but some people in this province need to have a voice because clearly the government is not listening. They're not listening to the people who don't agree with them. They're cheerleading for certain people within a small minority group and ignoring the rest of what Albertans are saying.

For the beef producers who couldn't get their livestock to market or who couldn't get their feed from the United States and for many of our other producers who couldn't export their products, this government was silent. Now the government plays games instead of offering real support. I'm not surprised. They have ignored our agricultural sector during the pandemic, and they ignored them during the drought. They ignore agriculture all along.

This government claims to care about the economy. Well, here's the number that I care about: \$864 million. I'll say it again; \$864 million is what our economy has lost because of the Coutts border blockade, the illegal blockade that this government chose to do nothing about. This blockade hurt all of our economic sectors in Alberta, but it hit agriculture the hardest. Delays at the border meant cattle had to wait to be transported. JBS and Cargill, which process two-thirds of the nation's beef, cut their shifts, delayed shipments, and delayed purchasing.

This government should stop cheering on those who illegally blocked our trade corridors. They should actually just stand in this House and apologize to Albertans and then pledge to do better. It's time for real leadership. This is a time for this government to start unifying Alberta instead of picking a select few, picking the special interests of a small group and putting it over the best interests of all Albertans. Hope comes from the top, Madam Speaker. For the people of this province to have hope, they have to see it in their leadership. That starts with this Premier. We are at a time that will be reflected on as a very historical moment for Alberta and for Canada, a moment that can lead to the unity of a province or a nation or a moment that will be used to further divide us. The most important part of democracy is the value of public trust, to know that those who are responsible for being the leaders are actually going to lead, that they're going to lead with honesty and with good intent.

Clearly, our democracy is at risk. We know that Albertans are exhausted by the emotions of COVID, by the uncertainty of the future and the economic impact that it's had on all Alberta families. That exhaustion brings fear for the future, a feeling of constant uncertainty, creating a desire for people to gain back some sort of control of what is happening in their lives. Honestly, I can say that I believe that for those who attended the rallies, even outside the Legislature recently, that's what they're trying to express, trying to get some control back into their lives. However, the 18 days at Coutts was not a rally; it was an illegal blockade that furthered the uncertainty for all Alberta families, that furthered the economic impact that families are already facing and created more uncertainty than it did bringing us together.

For Albertans to feel they have some control in their lives, this government needs to step up, address the fear that Albertans are facing, lead, and start giving them some more certainty in their lives, something that they continuously, continuously fail to do. It's time for the government to reconsider the direction that they're taking. It's time to return to the basic ideas of our democracy, bring faith back into our democratic process. I honestly could care less about the UCP leadership review. I don't care about the Premier's fight to save his job because the reality is that he made the mess. But what I do have an issue with is the fact that he thinks that

Albertans now have to clean it up for him because he refuses to do it for himself.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there other members wishing to join the debate? The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

Mr. Long: Thank you, Madam Speaker. For many years Canadians, including myself, have been proud to call themselves one of the greatest democracies of the world. Under this current federal government that seems to be changing very quickly. Since coming to power, the federal government and the Prime Minister have done nothing but cause division within our country.

The most recent example of this is the invocation of the Emergencies Act. Thankfully, the public's outcry has forced their hand to revoke this ridiculous, power trip fuelled move. When the federal government invoked this act, it showed their incompetence by failing to listen to people's concerns and using force to get their way. What's more, they thought that depriving Canadians of expressing their constitutional freedom of free speech would go unnoticed. This is not the only instance of division and chaos we have seen under this current Prime Minister.

8:20

Since 2015 all their government has done is overspend on programs that are focused on advancing their ideological agenda. This overspending goes back to pre-COVID times. We all remember: the budget will balance itself. Obviously, that still appears to be the theme of this current government. Their 2019-2020 spending was \$24 billion higher than the original plan. They used COVID as a way to throw Canadians \$314 billion further into debt. Among a myriad of fiscal issues, the overspending and overborrowing by the current Prime Minister means that hard-working Canadians now have to pay the consequence in the form of increasing interest rates. While many may not realize it, such poor economic policies cause a great divide among Canadians, this with the threat of higher costs in our economy looming.

The Prime Minister's sleight of hand does not end there. The current federal government is obsessed with control to the point that Canada is beginning to look more like a dictatorship. For example, Canada already has stringent gun control laws. Still, the Prime Minister decided to take things one step further and push his party's agenda to tighten that gun control, practically moving toward banning them altogether. Current advertising that we witness on media and social media continues to spew the rhetoric that we've mentioned many times in this Assembly.

As bad as his evident thirst for control has been for Canadians, it is nothing compared to the horrible cover-ups and ethics violations that have been used strategically to distract the public from what is really going on in Ottawa. The Prime Minister and his loyalists are so obsessed with control that they have now decided that they need to control the Internet. Under the guise of protecting consumers, they passed Bill C-10, giving his regime the power to regulate any content posted online. Of course, we would expect this behaviour from dictatorships, not here in Canada. This bill is so incredibly controlling that even Google's president and chief legal officer for global affairs voiced his concerns and cautioned about how this could impair people's online experiences. As Canadians began to speak up against Internet control, the federal government distracted the public by making headlines as they promised \$400 million for four years to make CBC less reliant on advertising.

Since assuming office, our current Prime Minister has been charged with three ethics violations. Many will recall that in 2019 he received a \$500 fine for exerting influence over the former

Attorney General in a matter relating to criminal prosecution. This small fine may lead some to believe that the issue was not a huge matter of concern. However, it is essential to note that \$500 is the maximum monetary penalty for public officials guilty of violating the Conflict of Interest Act. Can you imagine the uproar his party would have made had another person committed an ethics violation of such a degree?

What is worse is that he didn't learn from his mistake when he violated the Conflict of Interest Act when he vacationed on a private island owned by the Aga Khan, again to a penalty of \$500, the maximum. What I've mentioned today are the actions of a person who does not think of anyone but himself and will do everything in his power to distract people from his constant attempts to sow division among Canadians.

By invoking and revoking the Emergencies Act, they've failed to respond to the people's concerns. The tyranny and lack of accountability are the concerns that need to be addressed. I condemn what is happening in Ottawa under this current regime, and I will continue to ask people from coast to coast in our great country to hold them accountable for everything, including their intrusion into this recent provincial jurisdiction.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to rise and join the debate tonight on Government Motion 10. As we all know, this is just more political theatre from this government and the Emergencies Act itself has been revoked by the federal government, but tonight's debate still allows us to talk about the failures of this government to stand up for southern Albertans, the trucking industry, and the working Albertans they effectively abandoned. Like my colleague from Calgary-Bhullar-McCall, I'm disappointed that this is where we find ourselves as a province over the past few weeks.

As the Official Opposition critic for Transportation I am and remain profoundly disappointed by the actions of this provincial government during these illegal blockades. Watching members of the UCP caucus going forth to join the protest, to celebrate with them, to praise those who were breaking the law and hurting Albertans was unthinkable. Watching as well this government that flatly refused to take action and do the simple things that would have supported the truckers and working people who were just trying to do their jobs and who got caught up in these convoys – some were stranded for days with no food, no water, no access to washrooms or medicine. I heard about shipments that were lost, spoiled, and some had to be thrown away. Businesses lost revenue. Workers lost employment. These workers lost money, lost employment, saw delays, and dealt with more than I could possibly list here today.

But the people in the trucking industry that I've spoken to are upset with the government's lack of response to the crisis that they and their employees faced. I've heard the stories from truckers in the South Asian community who faced instances of racism, disgusting comments from those illegally blockading our border. These are individuals who stood up and worked to keep our supply lines strong during a pandemic. Madam Speaker, they deserved better.

Their government refused to stand up for them because they were too busy standing with those who were illegally blocking our border. The Member for Taber-Warner repeatedly visited these illegal blockades. It wasn't a secret. It wasn't a mistake. It was deliberate, and he bragged about it. He told people holding our border hostage that they had inspired nations. There were individuals who travelled to bring those stranded on the other side

of the border food and supplies while the government sat on their hands. They could have revoked the insurance of those who were illegally blockading the border. They could have revoked commercial drivers' licences of those who were openly breaking the law. They could have done this simply. Instead, they did nothing.

They didn't see a need to go to court to request an injunction, as my friend from Calgary-Bhullar-McCall and I urged them to. They equivocated, fudged, and pussyfooted for weeks with the illegal blockaders until the RCMP found a cache of weapons and ammunition and charged 13 people who were part of the blockade group with serious offences. The balance of the blockaders promptly abandoned their blockade, claiming to just then realize that they had been co-opted by bad people with ulterior motives and disavowing any connection with them. They further expressed surprise that the RCMP had allowed the blockade to continue as long as it did.

Now, this government, Madam Speaker, is very low in the polls, with a Premier who is facing a leadership review, who has failed to support Albertans when they needed his support and is now playing political games rather than doing the work to support Albertans. At a time when we need to be bringing Albertans together, the Premier and his MLAs, through their actions and statements, have only divided communities.

Well, Madam Speaker, let's reel this in a little bit. Let's throttle back and really ask ourselves what this is all about. Think of the number 36,000, give or take: 36,000 COVID deaths. During World War I 61,000 Canadian soldiers died in battle. Now 36,000 have died during the pandemic versus 61,000 in World War I; 60 per cent of the number of people who died in World War I in service to Canada died during this pandemic and counting. In World War II 45,400 Canadian soldiers died versus the 36,000 Canadians who have died so far in this pandemic. That's 80 per cent of the number of people who died during World War II in Canada as Canadian soldiers have died as a result of this pandemic.

Let's reel it in, and let's talk about what we're really, fundamentally trying to get our hands around, and that is to prevent further deaths at the hands of this pandemic in this country. We have a duty to do that. Now, people who, indeed, were conscientious objectors in World War I and World War II had certain consequences. There were consequences to their conscientious objection. Indeed, with those who refuse to accept that a society has a right to protect itself from a vicious disease, there are consequences as well for not getting vaccinated. There are mandates, and a society has a right to do that.

Madam Speaker, insofar as this pandemic is concerned in Alberta, there have been over 3,830 people dead and counting. The social responsibility that we seem to be forgetting, this necessity to look out after each other, reminds me of a story I've heard my grandfather tell me about. He was born in Quebec, but his family moved out here in 1911, when he was seven. At the age of 14, on the homestead, he worked out for a number of months in the fall of 1918. On the way home, making his way home after being away for a number of months, a farmer with a wagon pulled by a horse picked him up, and on the way home, a little further, another young fellow was picked up. They didn't talk a whole lot, but close to the farm gate the farmer slowed down. Both the boys got off. My grandfather was a bit perplexed. He hadn't been home in a number of months, and he didn't recognize that it was his younger brother, Phillippe, who was getting off with him because Phillippe was wearing a mask, Madam Speaker.

8:30

North of Edmonton about 60 miles, in the village of Thorhild, before cars were running around Alberta, in the horse-and-buggy era, we knew well enough to protect each other with a mask during

a pandemic like the Spanish flu in 1918. Albertans are rightly asking: what in the world has gone wrong with us since then? Why can't we, as a matter of social responsibility, realize what they knew in 1918 and accepted without so much as a howdy-do? Why are we railing against vaccine mandates? That is what 90 per cent of Albertans are asking. We have an obligation to protect one another in this war on disease and the public health emergency. My grandfather Napoleon LaBelle is probably rolling in his grave. I'll say that again. Shame on this government.

To conclude, I urge this Premier to take a step back, realize the harm his weak leadership has caused, and apologize to the Albertans he failed to support time and time again and to hearken to the real spirit of Alberta. For over a hundred years Albertans in times of crisis have fully accepted their duty to help one another, whether building a barn, fixing a flooded county road, or wearing a mask to protect each other from a deadly virus like the Spanish flu or now COVID-19. We forget this crucial duty of self-preservation at our peril.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I count it a privilege to be able to rise tonight and to speak to Government Motion 10. We have a long history in Canada of a vibrant and thriving democracy that has grown out of our deep ties and our history with the British Crown. It has endured through war and the strains of economic hardship and the stresses of a growing and diverse multicultural nation. Our democratic institutions have proven to be a wiry, tough, old soldier, stronger and wiser and more adaptable than many of us could have foreseen. Yet democracies can also be fragile.

Our parliamentary democracy is built upon some very important foundation stones that help to keep the ship of state functioning in the interests of its citizens: free and fair elections, representative and responsible government, separation of powers, the rule of law, Charter rights and freedoms, a free press, independent judiciary, trust in our institutions. All and more of these foundation stones combine to ensure that the government is a reflection of the will of the people and that it respects minority rights. When these foundation stones are abused, ignored, or set aside, the democracy can become weak, the people can lose trust, and it may ultimately fail.

COVID has divided our nation, and it has made the divisions that were already there deeper and more serious. It has begun to create a people who are visibly frustrated and distrustful of our political institutions and prepared to challenge the very laws and the institutions that govern them. Our nation has been divided before – divisions between French and English, divisions over conscription policy, divisions between east and west – yet we have seen past political leaders in this country rise to the occasion, listen, and eventually address the divisions and develop a unique Canadian consensus that heals the wounds and rebuilds the people's faith in democracy. This can happen again, it must happen again, but it will only happen again if the political leadership at all levels and the people across this nation take a step back from the abyss of anger and mistrust and start to listen to each other.

There have been some consistent themes that I have heard over and over from my constituents as we have had to live and adjust our lives through the COVID pandemic. One is the expectation that we will do our best to protect the vulnerable from COVID. Another has been that our COVID policy must respect the individual rights and freedoms of our citizens. It cannot be one or the other. Any government action must pursue both policy goals.

The invocation of the Emergencies Act allows the government to rule by emergency decree. It is not about listening, dialogue, and developing consensus; it is about action and power. It provides the government with unparalleled power to set aside the checks and balances that are integral to a democracy. Under this act the government would control the regulation or be able to prohibit any public assembly that may lead to a breach of the peace. It can control travel to and from any specified area. It can control the use of specified property. The government can evacuate people and remove property. It can requisition, use, or dispose of property. It can direct any person to render essential services, and it can regulate the distribution and availability of essential goods, services, and resources. The government is given extraordinary powers that they would never normally have. Therefore, the Emergencies Act should only be invoked in the most extreme of national emergencies.

Built into the act are thresholds that must be met before the act can be invoked. The emergency must threaten the security of Canada and be a national emergency. The emergency must be of such significance that the government clearly needs the power to protect and preserve the government of Canada, the sovereignty, and our territorial integrity. We are talking about a scenario like a war or a threat of war or insurrection. It must be a serious threat that endangers the lives and the health or the safety of Canadians, and it must exceed the capacity of the province or the state to deal with it.

So the question that must be asked and must be answered is: were the thresholds for the invocation of the Emergencies Act actually reached? I believe that most Canadians would reasonably say no. I believe that the courts will ultimately conclude that the protests have not come close to meeting the thresholds set out in the Emergencies Act. There is no territorial threat to Canada. The protests may have broken the law, but they did not reach a level of violence that would constitute a national emergency. This was not World War I or World War II. These protests did not come anywhere close to the national security threat of the FLQ crisis. People were not being kidnapped, buildings were not being blown up, and banks were not being robbed to finance terror. The protests were not made up of revolutionaries but of ordinary people who believed their rights were being abridged by a policy of mandatory vaccination, and they wanted their government to listen to their concerns.

What has been remarkable has been how respectful and how nonviolent and how peaceful these protests were. Property was respected, and they even policed themselves, stopping any protesters who were about to cross the line. Even in Coutts the protesters showed their commitment to peaceful protest. When the police arrested a small handful of radical protesters who appeared to be willing to use violence, it was then that the leadership of the protesters said: "Okay. We'll pack it in. We don't want our message to be associated with any kind of violence."

Yes, people were inconvenienced, and, yes, there is evidence that the protests were breaking the law. There is no doubt that the protests hurt the Canadian economy. Yes, the rule of law needed to be applied, but the fact that the arrests were delayed so long in Ottawa was the result of federal political incompetence and a police force in Ottawa that seemed utterly unprepared to uphold the law. The blockading of ports of entry was very serious, but did the provincial and federal governments have the necessary law to be able to deal with the situation? Yes.

Clearly, in my opinion, the thresholds for invocation of the Emergencies Act were not reached, yet it was invoked, and its use prior to today's announcement has at times degenerated into something of a farce. Look at what many protesters in Ottawa are

being charged with: mischief or counselling mischief. Those were the charges that were needed to gain control of this national emergency? I feel like Allen Iverson when I say: mischief? I mean, we're talking about an emergency of such national importance that the charge is mischief? You mean mischief? Not treason but mischief? We needed to invoke the Emergencies Act for the first time in Canadian history so we could charge protesters with mischief? I'm just saying: mischief?

Yet for all of its farcical overtones, the invocation of the Emergencies Act was very serious stuff. By refusing to meet with the protesters and by trying to use wedge politics and heated rhetoric, the Prime Minister made a bad situation much worse. Rather than trying to build a consensus for how to move forward, as he has with so many progressive causes, he tried to demonize these totally average Canadians and use the sledgehammer of the Emergencies Act to make them behave. In so doing, he has sown distrust and alienation among a significant base of Canadians.

8:40

While other provinces, including Alberta, had been removing COVID restrictions, the Prime Minister appeared to be doubling down by mandating vaccinations on truckers. The Prime Minister's action and his rhetoric and the invocation of the Emergencies Act have done more to endanger our democracy and our respect for its institutions than anything the protesters could have done.

As a result of the invocation of the Emergencies Act, many Canadians feared that a small donation to the truckers or the purchase of a T-shirt in supporting the convoys could have resulted in the freezing and the seizing of their bank accounts. Basic civil liberties were lifted. People who funded a perfectly legal protest could have broken the law retroactively.

It is crucial, therefore, that we determine that the thresholds outlined in the act were actually met. A precedent for the act's further use has been set, and I believe that it is critical that a court rule on whether the thresholds were actually reached. If we want to draw this nation together, if we desire to live in a democracy where the foundation stones are strong, if we want to ensure that the government rules with the support and respect and trust of the people, then we must support this motion.

Today we stand in this Legislature as elected representatives of the people of Alberta. We have the opportunity to be statesmen, to look at what is in the best interests of the people and our democracy. The answer is clear, and I believe our duty is clear. We must vote in support of this motion, and then I would argue that the government of Alberta should challenge the invocation of the Emergencies Act in a court of law to determine whether or not it has met the thresholds of invocation.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members joining the debate? The hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont.

Mr. Rutherford: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Of course, as we all have heard today, earlier this month the Prime Minister had brought in the emergency measures act, and just a few short days ago he forced a confidence vote to defend its use in Parliament. Today he has announced that he is rescinding the use of that act, which is probably embarrassing for those members of his government who were defending it just hours before. Even as protests were cleared, the Prime Minister continued to defend the use of these powers. As public pressure mounted, it came from the sources that Trudeau fears the most, the progressive news sources of the *New York Times*, for instance, who are criticizing his government for its use. That

criticism came from Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and other countries.

The NDP state that their support of the emergency measures act comes with the stipulation that it can't be used on First Nations protests, climate or environmental protests. The NDP support significant government powers to be utilized only to pursue protesters that they disagree with. If this blockade in Ottawa or in Coutts or elsewhere in this country was about pipelines, the NDP or the Liberals federally would never have gone through with the emergency measures act. They never would have done it. You can see this because it wasn't that long ago that a blockade of a rail line lasted 19 days. It took several injunctions, just to show the uselessness of injunctions. It took two injunctions to try to get the police to move in. The government did not invoke the emergency measures act for that because it was about something that they agreed with.

The NDP have been on the front steps of this Legislature protesting pipelines. The NDP Party has endorsed the protests of the Coastal GasLink. Recently workers there have been violently attacked with axes, threatened with heavy machinery. One worker had their vehicle set on fire, I believe, while they were still in it. And it doesn't matter to the NDP. They would not have supported the emergency measures act for that protest.

At this time, Madam Speaker, when parts of the world are on edge, for instance, about war in eastern Europe, the decisions of a weak federal government really come to light. Not only will they use extraordinary powers to quell opposition voices, but they are propped up by the NDP, who only want to use extraordinary powers on certain people. Decisions made on natural gas and oil infrastructure, that could have been used to help supply Europe with energy, have left the continent receiving about a third of their energy use and supply from Russia. People in Europe will still use oil and gas, and the federal government has ensured one thing. The supply from Canada is not an option; they must rely on Russia.

Here in Alberta we have of course had situations recently with the blockade at the Coutts border crossing, and what we have shown is that these protests can be resolved with regular policing and the laws that are already available. In no way was it necessary or acceptable to invoke the Emergencies Act. The NDP tried to use, I believe, political pressure, directly or indirectly, on the RCMP to act, and that was an incredibly volatile situation which the RCMP dealt with. I understand that you might want to have this go faster and you want it to be over with quicker, but there are times where you have to have some patience. It's just an unfortunate fact of policing. I have been at standoffs. I have done this, same with other members in this Chamber, where patience is important, right? You get trained not to rush some of these situations because of how volatile they can become. Would the NDP still be pushing for action to have happened if the RCMP moved too quickly and it became a shootout? We've seen that there are clearly guns on both sides and a lot of innocent people trying to protest, sure, trying to get their voices heard. That's a lot of crossfire. Sometimes you have to take time with these things.

There have been a lot of firsts, Madam Speaker, over the last two years. Lots of lessons, of course, to learn, but even as we come out of these restrictions and see a chance to move forward, I think that the instinct of the federal government was not to defuse the situation with dialogue, but it was to inflame the situation with government overreach, and it was a desperation to politicize the pandemic for political gain. I've heard loud and clear from my constituents in Leduc-Beaumont about their disbelief in the Prime Minister. They, like many Canadians across the country, ask: when does this end? They've also asked: what opinion do they have that's going to result in their bank account being frozen? I think that that's a question that

many have on their mind, and maybe you don't consider that until it's on your doorstep that it's happening.

Like, I would get calls over the last years on restrictions, and many times it was the first time the government had ever done something to restrict someone's freedom, so they challenged it, and so they should challenge it. The government should never feel comfortable restricting people's freedoms, and how lackadaisical the NDP are with people's freedoms is unbelievable to me, that they feel that if they get questioned on this, you're clearly just against overall public safety or you don't care about your neighbour. That's just not true. You're taking away people's freedoms to do something. The government should never feel comfortable doing that, and frankly a lot of Canadians, lots of people in my constituency have had enough. They and with a lot of other Canadians, of course, have voiced their opposition to the Emergencies Act. Today due to the tremendously large outcry from Canadians across the country opposing the Emergencies Act, Justin Trudeau is forced to revoke it. However, the fact that he brought in the Emergencies Act in the first place is still a problem. It is still very concerning.

The Prime Minister said that invoking the former War Measures Act was the responsible and necessary thing to do. Madam Speaker, I would strongly disagree with this. In fact, invoking the Emergencies Act was an irresponsible thing to do. Justin Trudeau put Alberta in a state of emergency when there, in fact, was no emergency to justify this. The Emergencies Act took away civil liberties and democracy and gave the Prime Minister all kinds of new power.

Over the past couple of years citizens have endured a tremendous amount. Some have lost their jobs or businesses. Others have lost the right to be able to participate in things that they love: sports, in-person education, socializing with friends, visiting family members, funerals, weddings. All have been curtailed, and it is to deal with a common problem of a pandemic, but this still puts a lot of stress on people, and when that stress turns to demonstrations and protests, it is best for political leaders to listen, to reassess the situation, to have a dialogue with people and come together to make the best decision on the path forward.

It is not a time to inflame the situation, and just because Trudeau doesn't agree with those protesters does not mean that he should have the power to put in the emergency measures act to stop them. Consider the precedent that this sets for the future. These protesters just wanted to be heard, and while we heard them, Justin Trudeau, Madam Speaker, tried to silence them.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members to join the debate? The hon. Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat.

8:50

Mrs. Frey: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just wanted to kind of start a little bit unconventionally just because I saw that Russia has officially declared that it'll be going into Ukraine tonight. I think that's a sobering moment for every single person in this Chamber regardless of the debate that we're having. There are some pretty crazy things going on in the world right now, and I just wanted to send my – as a provincial politician I'm not sure what else I can do, but I just wanted to send my prayers and say that my thoughts are with the people of Ukraine tonight as they brace for potential terror. I just can't imagine what they're feeling right now. So to start off with saying that just because I think it's important, no matter how crazy things get in this Chamber, to remember that there's always more.

Completely unrelated, I guess, I will move on. I was pretty struck by what was going on in Ottawa. I mean, it was, I think, a Monday morning. I was driving to Brooks. I'm from Medicine Hat. My

riding is in both places, of course, Brooks-Medicine Hat, but Brooks is about an hour away from my house. So for those who don't speak in time and actually use kilometres, it's about 100 kilometres, for those of you who don't really venture down to that side of the province.

As I was driving, I noticed just a really large number of people out for 7 o'clock in the morning. I went to grab my coffee. I left McDonald's, I crossed the highway, and all of a sudden there were trucks and people and Canadian flags and families all over the highway. I mean, like, we could be hyperbolic and say that there were tens of thousands, Madam Speaker, but there were literally a thousand people, I bet, between Brooks and Medicine Hat that day. It seemed like the entire city of Brooks was out. Half of Medicine Hat must have been out. And that was early. I think the truckers were expected to come through Medicine Hat at, like, 10:30, and I'm not even sure they came through till 1 o'clock, but people just kept piling on. I saw families, like I said. I saw people that I knew through church. I saw people all over the place, and it was really compelling to see just ordinary people – as we know as politicians, not everybody engages in politics the same way – severely normal Albertans, the Henrys and Marthas, if you will, and their kids coming out in large numbers to wave to the truckers.

I think it's worth saying, you know, that just because you were out there doesn't mean that you support every single aspect of what they were talking about. I mean, this grassroots movement, which is something that I think every politician – if there are that many people lining the highway in your riding, you better stop and take note. So that's exactly what I did. I pulled over, and I was waving as I saw it. All of a sudden a bunch of trucks started coming through. I mean, they were going at highway speeds, so it was hard to read everything that was on the trucks. But it was just – there were things like: I want my freedom back. There were things like: stop the mandates. I didn't see anything really vulgar, quite honestly. I mean, there was some colourful language about the Prime Minister, sure. I mean, it's not as bad as I've heard in my riding about the Prime Minister, but it was colourful nonetheless.

Of course, they should be parliamentary, but I think what was shown that day was just how angry people really are and how they're, you know, at the point where you just can't get blood from a stone anymore, Madam Speaker. They wanted change. They want something done. They see this as a never-ending battle, as something that they are never going to get out of, and I understand because for the past two years it has felt like it was never-ending, and I say that as a government MLA who – it feels like every time you come in to work, there's something else that has to be dealt with for a problem that we thought was going to be solved months ago, a year ago. Heck, I was hopeful it would have been way sooner than that, but here we are – right? – still talking about the same darn thing.

You know, I really thought: this many severely normal people out on I think it was a Monday morning, out to cheer on a bunch of truckers, like, somebody's got to listen to them. Lo and behold, nobody did. These truckers came to Ottawa. They set up shop, and their intention was to lobby the Prime Minister. Their intention was to ask the Prime Minister, with gusto, of course, to end the mandates, to support them, to recognize their autonomy, and recognize that they want to live their lives.

What did the Prime Minister do? Well, he did what his father did but with words. He gave us his version of the Trudeau salute. Let's put it that way. You know, I will say – I've heard hon. members asking what the Trudeau salute is. I think the railcar has been preserved that the Trudeau salute took place in. So without being unparliamentary, I would just say: google it.

The protest, of course, started garnering a lot of national attention. It started garnering international attention as it had gone

on for quite a while. I was, of course, horrified to see that there were some very disturbed people who decided to co-opt such a peaceful movement by displaying such hateful symbols. I'm glad that the convoy organizers immediately denounced them. I'm glad that politicians of all stripes denounced them. I do as well. Of course, we know that those symbols have absolutely no place in Canada. They have absolutely no place in any sort of peaceful protest. Hate symbols of any kind should not be allowed.

[The Speaker in the chair]

But I do find it ironic that we can see hammers and sickles, the symbols of communist oppression, with Greta Thunberg and every single protest, eco justice protest, and the CBC doesn't write one story about that. But one person, a terrible person with a horrible symbol – I'm not excusing that, and I want that on the record over and over again. That same photo will receive countless hours of media coverage. I guess that's what happens when you get \$600 million, isn't it?

You know, I don't support illegal blockades. Never have, never will. I was heavily criticized because I actually put forward Bill 1, the Critical Infrastructure Defence Act. It was supposed to be my private member's bill, but the Minister of Justice at the time liked it so much that it became a government bill. I support that bill a hundred per cent. I did then. I do now.

We need to have those kinds of tools at our disposal, and we can't be inconsistent, and we have to remain principled, that a blockade is a blockade is a blockade. When a peaceful protest turns into the blocking of critical infrastructure, it does need to be dealt with, so I understand that.

However, what I don't understand and what I fail to understand is why it ever had to get to that point. If we didn't have a Prime Minister that is so derelict in his duty to lead, we would have never gotten here. If the Prime Minister would have stopped the unscientific, unwarranted mandates, allow people real freedom of choice, not compelling them, not coercing them, we would have never . . .

An Hon. Member: Bullying them.

Mrs. Frey: He bullied them. Exactly.

We would have never gotten here if he wouldn't have gone out instead of listening to people and said – if he would have just gone out and said, “Hey, I'm here; I've met with every other controversial figure in the world; why can't I meet with you?” and just said for a moment: “I hear you. I understand. You must be in pain for you to come out here, all the way out of your way, to spend time on my doorstep.”

If he would have just given them a moment of his time instead of immediately resorting to calling them racists and misogynists and every other name out of the book, we would not be here right now, but we are. This Prime Minister: even members of his own caucus and the Senate, I believe, have said that he is stoking division in this country at a time when western alienation was already high.

You know, I've heard many people enhance the calls for separation, which is something that I don't support. I'm a monarchist. I love this Confederation. I love Canada. My great-grandfather fought in World War II. He'd be turning in his grave right now knowing what's going on here and what our Prime Minister has done. He didn't like the first Trudeau, and I'm assuming he wouldn't like the second one very much either. But, you know, I refuse to let Justin Trudeau kick me out of my own country. I refuse to be alienated and refuse to feel like that is my only resort.

I want to thank the Canadians who are going there and protesting. I want to thank them for their bravery in speaking out against the Emergencies Act, and I want to thank our government for giving me the opportunity to do that as well.

9:00

I've also noticed in the last few days, or the last week or so, that the word “freedom,” which I think to be a wonderful thing and something that we should be yelling from the rooftops, has now become a curse word according to the left. You know, I saw the CBC article a while ago about the 18 words we need to remove from our vernacular because they're offensive and everything else, and of course we should be mindful of how other people feel, but the word “freedom,” Mr. Speaker? Since when did that become a dirty word? We have people who fought and died so that we have the right to say that word, and I bet there are people around the world right now who wish that they could be as proud of a nation as we are to be Canadian. I'm so proud to fly that maple leaf, and I will be every day till the day I die.

You know, when we see Liberal MPs getting up in the House and making any kind of equivalency between the words “honk, honk” – I mean, I thought, when I was young, it was a duck sound; now it's a symbol of a movement – for them to equivocate that with “heil Hitler” just goes to show you the lengths to which the Liberals and the left are willing to go to alienate and further divide Canadians. It's pathetic, Mr. Speaker. It's despicable, and it's unbecoming of anyone who holds elected office. Shame on them.

I heard colleagues of mine today. The hon. Member for Taber-Warner said: you know, I'm a lawmaker, not a lawbreaker. I'll stand by that as well, because we are. We are here to make laws, but we also have the obligation to know when we've gone too far and not do that. The Prime Minister, instead of pulling it back last night, held on to power for a second longer. He didn't even vote on it, from what I understand. He implemented the Emergencies Act only to rescind it today. I wouldn't like to be a Liberal MP right now, Mr. Speaker – although I wouldn't ever, I wouldn't like to be a Liberal MP right now especially – because they just spent the last however many days with a confidence vote, a matter of confidence in a minority government situation, defending that kind of gross overreach. It blows my mind that that is what we have come to in this country.

You know, for the Prime Minister, the man who doesn't even know how many times he's done blackface, to run out and accuse people of being racist misogynists and part of a fringe minority: that's pretty rich. This is also the same guy who goes out and makes these defamatory statements about everyday, ordinary people, some of which were from Brooks-Medicine Hat. He calls them everything under the sun. His MPs call them everything under the sun, including terrorists. This is the same guy who paid \$10.5 million to Omar Khadr – the same guy, Mr. Speaker – and he wants to lecture us about who the bad guy is here. We have a responsibility as lawmakers to know when we've gone too far. Unfortunately, I feel like the moral compass has gone on this Prime Minister. It was gone a long time ago.

But all I have to say to my constituents is this. I hear you. I support you. We have to keep our eye on the ball here, which is getting Justin Trudeau out of office at the earliest possible moment, but we can't divide ourselves in the process. Right now you see so many people – Conservatives, Liberals, otherwise – turn on each other because it's a heightened, awful political environment in which we live. I want my constituents to know that I stand behind them, that even though sometimes I might vehemently disagree with them, sometimes I might think that the methods that they've gone to are not the most effective, I hear them.

This has been an awful two years, Mr. Speaker. It has been hard. It has been long. There have been people who have lost their lives, their livelihoods, their homes. I mean, now they're losing access to their bank accounts. And we are coming out on the other side of this. I hope that this week, starting with the throne speech, is a point

of a new beginning, and I hope that we can put this behind us once and for all.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Government Motion 10. The hon. Member for Chestermere-Strathmore has the call.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for this opportunity to my colleagues, too. It's been really a pleasure to hear everybody tonight. We have heard it all before, and we're going to hear it again, because the last few years – and I think it's worth repeating again – have been absolutely horrible and some of the most trying times for our nation and our province, our friends and our families. But I'd like to start off, first, by commending Canadians and Albertans for their strength and their resilience and their spirit. It's really, really hard when we see our leaders take a different direction, especially when that direction goes to undermining the feelings and values of our own citizens.

If you think about it, so many of us, right across this beautiful province and across Canada, have been through so much – the trials, the losses, the stress, the isolation – and every citizen in the nation and globally has experienced this collectively. Then we see leadership go in a space where they are attacking the democratic rights of our people, and they've already been through so much. We've asked them to restrict their freedoms and their rights, and you know what? For the most part, Mr. Speaker, we understood those restrictions, and people sacrificed being with their loved ones, their businesses – it's been said before, but I'll repeat it again – birthdays, weddings, funerals to help each other, to keep our citizens safe, and especially to keep our health care systems working. Thank you so much to the thousands of health care and front-line workers who have kept us safe throughout this pandemic. There are just not enough words of gratitude.

When you are a leader of a nation and you are at a time when your nation is hurting and you have this amazing opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to unite us and the opportunity to actually sit for the first time and listen to regular, everyday folks and hear their pain because they've assembled at their House in Ottawa – it belongs to them just like this Legislature belongs to the people of Alberta. Instead of hearing the good, honest folks – and I'm not talking about the ones that were there to undermine the messages but the real everyday Canadians – who needed to know at that time that the leader of their country cared enough to have a conversation with them and instead used this opportunity to exploit powers that could limit everything from rights on housing, finances, and faith.

Not only was it completely undemocratic – I have to say that I am so grateful to have seen the Prime Minister change his direction – but despite the revocation of the act as of earlier today, we have to ask the question, and I think we have to get back, fundamentally, to why we're asking this question about exercising grave measures of power upon the citizens of the nation and where the Emergencies Act is only supposed to be used. I mean, the circumstances have to be really serious, Mr. Speaker, and it has to be challenging the lives and health and safety of Canadians and compromise the government's ability to be able to preserve the sovereignty and security and territorial integrity of Canada. It comes with a pretty major caveat, too, that it can only be invoked in circumstances that cannot be addressed by any other law in Canada. It's very, very difficult to understand that the government proposed an order to open up the Emergencies Act when there are many other opportunities to be able to talk about critical infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, protests are a pillar of democracy, and they are meant to bring attention. They're a plea from the citizens who have a feeling of being marginalized and who, when they've had their

freedoms restricted like this – and I realize that there were massive disruptions and the attention, but we have to ask if those protests warranted the enforcement of this authority. They did not threaten the lives of Canadians. They do not threaten the well-being of Canadians. They do not harm the nation. I want to be clear. I will never support illegal blockades, shaming, censorship, or bullying. I have close friends in my riding, too, that lost serious money because of the blockades. We really need to make sure that we all understand where we all sit with this.

9:10

I will never support voices that invoke racism or bigotry or discrimination from anyone, but the question we fundamentally have to ask, Mr. Speaker, is: why specifically did we need the Emergencies Act? I mean, let's look at the facts. Blocking critical infrastructure violates the Criminal Code. Both provincial and municipal governments have any number of tools through the RCMP, from impounding vehicles to arrest. Police can already freeze bank accounts under the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act if the blockade continued. You can even call in the military without the Emergencies Act. The National Defence Act allows the army to be called out with any disturbance to the peace that overwhelms the normal police resources, and we can always call upon our Mounties, both provincially and federally, to come in as reinforcements.

We have to respect democratic safeguards. We have to respect and properly consult with our provinces and territories. We must make sure that we are not invoking legislation that acts callously and reacts so quickly, and we must always, when we're invoking control on citizens and encroaching on their lives, not also encroach on provincial legislation and jurisdiction. We also have to have faith in our law agencies and the committed groups to handle these situations. It just screams that it did not require this level of overreach in order to be able to attain the needed desire to remove these blockades.

I want to make sure that we all understand that the Prime Minister never had the legal justification to invoke that act, and when you have this level of authoritative power move on to the people just because they disagree with his policies, we have to ask the question of a failure in leadership. We are a democratic nation, Mr. Speaker, a peaceful nation where we thrive on the ability to be able to express ourselves and coexist. We cannot at this time, when we are hurting so much, when there's so much pain, look to divide the nation.

I wanted to also highlight that in the federal House of Commons the vote was 185 to 151. There were only 34 votes that actually separated the vote at the federal Parliament. My goodness. That is awfully close to make a decision to invoke the Emergencies Act when so many people are asking the same questions that we were.

Instead of being divisive and taking away democratic spirit, we have to question leadership. We have to question whether or not the leader of our nation has the capacity to talk to everyday people and reassure them that they understand where they're coming from. It is time for us to unify and to come together and to work together. Isn't that what our federal government said? It's what we've been saying, for sure.

I think what was really interesting is that the federal government had spoken about not keeping the act in any longer than necessary. Then why, after seven days, did they go back to make a motion to extend the act? This is another fundamental question we need to ask.

I mean, the struggle is real, isn't it? So many people have spoken about it in here, and I think that if we take the time to honestly reflect back on what we've all been through, there is not a single

person that any of us meets every single day that hasn't been impacted by this. All of us in here have to change our rhetoric, and we have to work together to make sure that we're actually here for the people of this province and not working against each other.

If we're going to get back to that day one day where we can look at whatever that normal looks like, we also have to begin to heal, Mr. Speaker, and that healing can only happen if we lead by example and we show that we are there for the people that need us in a time of crisis. That's true leadership. It's being willing to listen and to respond, to be able to take in that information and participate with your fellow Canadians. It doesn't matter whether you agree with them or not. The Prime Minister didn't need to come out and say that he agreed with people. He just needed to listen to them. You don't run away from difficult conversations, and you don't allow the bullies and the keyboard cowboys or the trolls to rule your behaviour.

Showing up to a protest is fundamental to democracy. I am as disgusted as anyone about the racist comments, the flying of swastikas, defacing of statues, and any other inappropriate and, frankly, concerning behaviour in those instances is deplorable and should absolutely be called out, but as gross as those actions and behaviours are, you have to answer the question: was the Emergencies Act the right intervention to that behaviour? That's the question.

Again, I'm grateful that the federal leadership has changed the direction of where they went with this. Quite frankly, there's no judicial oversight in that government section of that act. That's very, very concerning.

I ask this question, too: how can we become a nation stronger and more united when we are compelled to jump into emergency acts as a normal part of our privilege? I would like to quote, from the *National Post*, an article by Tristin Hopper.

[The] Freedom Convoy blockade is now gone, and it notably occurred without any Emergencies Act assistance. After RCMP arrested 13 people and seized a cache of firearms, traffic is now flowing freely at the Coutts, Alta. border crossing for the first time in two weeks. In a strange development for a police operation that saw the seizure of a large arsenal of high-powered firearms, the Coutts blockade ultimately ended with hugs between the police and blockaders and the joint singing of "O Canada."

Again, while I am grateful for the revocation of the act, justice prevailed, and injustice was put to rest although this does not change the fact that our leader saw an opportunity and erroneously saw an opportunity to overreach into a space that was not necessary, justified. After some of the most enduring and most difficult and hardest years that Canadians and all of us have experienced globally, it is time to unite Canada and unite us in democracy and peace. It is going to take a true leader, one who understands Canadians, to truly see us there.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Are there others on Government Motion 10? The hon. Member for Grande Prairie.

Mrs. Allard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to start. I'm not going to speak for long because I would just be repeating what many have said in the Chamber this evening. I wanted to thank all the Canadians who stood up against this abuse of power, all of you right across the country. I just want to say thank you for standing up for democracy, for standing up for freedoms, and for standing up for accountability and transparency in government.

The Emergencies Act is in place to be used in situations where the lives, health, or safety of Canadians are in critical condition. Since this obviously was not the case, the Prime Minister has

already revoked the use of the act. Evidently, it was not needed at all. I think that's become very clear to the Prime Minister and to his cabinet, and I suspect it's become very clear to others that are watching. Other countries, as had been mentioned by previous speakers, have spoken out against what's happened here in Canada. It's been embarrassing.

But it's been a proud moment for me as a proud Albertan and Canadian to see Canadians stand up and say: we've had enough; this is not okay. I just wanted to stand and thank them for that, Mr. Speaker.

I really don't need to say much more other than to say that once again the Prime Minister was wrong in what he did. It was a gross overreach. It was a gross abuse of power. I think that's become clear to everybody, and I hope that he's learned something from this experience. I hope other governments will be watching with great interest to see what comes next, and I hope he pays a price for it in the future elections. That's my hope. I believe that Canadians have spoken loud and clear that they're not going to accept this kind of behaviour. I think that we will see some changes in governments as a result in the future. I think that's the good news, that people have said: we've had enough. It goes without saying, Mr. Speaker.

As I said, I'm going to be very brief, and I will. I'm more than happy that this motion is no longer needed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Are there others? The hon. the Minister of Culture.

Mr. Orr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to speak up in support of Motion 10, which says essentially:

Be it resolved that the ... Assembly ...

- (a) condemn the unnecessary invocation of the Emergencies Act ...
- (b) [further] that the government of Canada has failed to demonstrate that the ... circumstances [even met] the threshold that the law requires ...

Essentially, they broke their own law.

- (c) [further that it's]... an unnecessary intrusion into provincial jurisdiction under the Constitution of Canada.

9:20

Mr. Speaker, it's time for Canadians to awake. Canada has changed under our noses. Without a doubt, the events of the last few days have shaken many of us to the core, at least the ones who like to live in a free and fair society. Louis Riel stood up for his people, and the Ottawa elite hanged him, and then later, in 1998, the government of Canada apologized for having done so. Canadian Prime Ministers have apologized in Parliament for the abuses of the War Measures Act, employed during World War I and World War II.

But there was no war in Ottawa this time. There was no foreign invasion, yet he invokes the War Measures Act, which is now called the Emergencies Act. There were no tanks in the street, Mr. Speaker, just food delivery trucks and furniture delivery trucks. There were no rocket launchers to be seen anywhere, just Canadian flags. There were no Navy SEALs. There was no airborne assault, just children with their parents, waving flags and trying to speak their voice and to be heard. There was no war in Ottawa streets, and there hasn't been, so what is the threat? Harmless, happy Canadians with flags waving, arriving in Ottawa to try and speak their mind, to try and be heard, and Trudeau, on the other side of Ottawa, running like a chicken with his head cut off, feathers flying, scared to death. Run; the fringe minority are coming. Head for the COVID bunker. What's the threat?

The only threat is to Trudeau's delusion that Canadians should obey his every command. Nobody should question him, and anyone

who dares to disagree should be assaulted by the police. Their bank accounts should be frozen. They should be thrown in jail, and they should be denigrated as subhuman. The real abuser is Trudeau himself and his chicken Liberals, who refuse to stand for what they know is right. Any Canadian who votes for the Liberals or the NDP after this supports tyranny and the abuse of power and needs to give their head a shake. Canada is a democracy, and I will never support turning it into a socialist police state. The Canada I knew is one of freedoms. They have made it into a dirty word. Alberta will be free. I warn you that one person's freedom gone today is yours gone tomorrow.

All Canadians need to wake up to this, especially the members across the aisle. Kelly McParland reported in an article in the *National Post* a few days ago that the leader of the federal NDP Alberta party – it's all the same party – would support, was willing to grant the Trudeau Liberals extraordinary powers against ordinary Canadians on the condition that it not be used against Indigenous land defenders, climate change activists, workers fighting for fairness. Really? And why not? On what moral or legal grounds? The barrier has been broken down. Now the truth is out: some Canadians deserve more protection than others. Protections have now become politicized according to a person's personal viewpoint.

Mr. Speaker, a Canadian is a Canadian, and I genuinely want to know if Alberta's NDP is onside with their federal leader. Can they say right here and now that the character and protection of our rights applies to all of us equally and not just those we agree with? Or is it okay to attack construction workers on pipelines with axes to destroy equipment, to burn their vehicles and their buildings? I didn't hear a word about that, not one whisper of condemnation of that, because they actually support it. They actually support that kind of violence.

Do only people who have acceptable views deserve protection in an overzealous federal government that has literally no idea how to govern, who is literally willing to trample Charter rights, the freedom of assembly and the freedom of speech? We are back to the future of *Nineteen Eighty-four*, truly. Are we actually living in such a country that if you do not share the same beliefs as your government, you will go to jail? We will make sure of that. The sad reality seems to be yes.

I call on all Canadians to rise peacefully, to assemble, to speak up every day, to assemble as often as you have to. Wake up. Canada is changing, and this cannot be allowed to continue. I know Trudeau revoked the act a few hours ago, another panicked reaction by him. I hope we never ever forget as Canadians how easy it was for him to enact that, to trample on your personal rights, your personal freedoms, the guaranteed Charter rights of our Constitution. To him, the Constitution apparently means nothing. I hope we never forget that. The federal government will tell us that it was a last resort, but it wasn't. It was a political action. They have politicized the Charter of Rights. This is a historic, irresponsible, and colossal overreach and abuse of power against all Canadians. The federal Liberals now think that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is just a suggestion that they can do or not do if they want to. The precedent has been set by Trudeau. There are no rights left according to what he has done this week.

Mr. Speaker, this is an embarrassment on the world stage. I don't care if you tune in to the news in India or Africa or Asia – I've tried to listen to them all lately – Europe. Everywhere you go, they mock what's happening in this country. It's a shameful, shameful moment in Canadian history.

There is no greater task than defending the rights and the civil liberties of our fellow Canadians. There is a sense of pride in supporting democracy. Trudeau and his supporters have failed their leadership. They have failed Canadians. They have failed Canada,

and the members across the aisle join and stand with him. There has been no respect, co-operation, or partnership, only disrespect and antagonism.

Mr. Speaker, I love this country, and I'm proud to be an Albertan, and as Albertans and Canadians we have to stand together during attacks on our fundamental Charter rights and freedoms and on a fair and democratic society that we have worked so hard to build. The price of freedom is eternal vigilance. We will fight for it. Don't let it go. The denial of rights to one Canadian is a denial of rights to all of us, and we must never let this become the norm. We must look out for Canada and for one another and never become complacent in our own democracy. Canadians, wake up.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Are there others? The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake has the call.

Mr. Rehn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue that we face today is one of misuse of power, the erosion of trust in the government, and the careless destruction of the rights of Canadians. I never would have thought that in my time as an elected representative, a Canadian, and, most importantly, an Albertan we would have to speak on these topics, but due to the power-grabbing actions of the Liberal government with support by the NDP, sadly we are here to do just that.

A little under a month ago we saw an unnecessary implementation of restrictions targeting one of the most important sectors of our country and our economy, truckers. While we were already experiencing a trucker shortage across the country, our federal government chose to hurt Canadians and Albertans even more, causing more shortages and increasing inflation on consumer goods like groceries. What started off as a peaceful protest of people protecting their livelihoods and supporting other truckers alike turned into a national and international movement of people wanting their own livelihoods and freedoms back as the pandemic started fizzling out.

But as most large movements come and go, there will always be a few bad apples in the bunch that attach themselves to a movement to do more than just peacefully gather. With this, we've seen the blocking of critical border crossings and the blocking of the downtown area of Parliament in Ottawa.

Sandy Williams, a constituent of mine from Kinuso, proudly took three of his children and a big truck and embarked with the convoy to Ottawa. He updated me every few days and remained peaceful and focused in what he was trying to set out to do, to try to put an end to the restrictions.

9:30

Trudeau refused to acknowledge the harm he was bringing to the trucking industry and to the country. He instead refused to listen to them. He compared them to Nazi-flag-holding white supremacists and even went as far as to accuse a Jewish Conservative MP of standing by the swastika. It is sad to see that we are in a time where our Prime Minister could make such a comment.

Going against the consultation of many Premiers across Canada, he decided to enact the Emergencies Act, not because there was a national emergency or grave threats to national security. It was enacted for specific tasks: to increase his power and to suppress the rights of those who oppose him. Provinces already had the power to clear blockades on their own even right here in Alberta at the Coutts border, where we were able to peacefully end the blockade without the use of the Emergencies Act.

I have had the distinct pleasure in my life to be a class 1 certified truck driver for over 30 years. I've been a member of the trucking

industry for a great deal of time, and I have met many awesome people in it I call my brothers, sisters, and my friends. These are the people that constitute the heart of this very nation. The majesty of this Assembly we see every day only carries the weight it does because behind it are the constituents, the people who work day in and day out and have passions and dreams and stay focused and work hard. A government cannot help its people achieve these dreams acting against them in the way the federal government has done, but these very people are what this is all about.

It has been the privilege of my life to serve my constituents, and they tell me, very sincerely, that the invoking of this act is wrong, that the pretense under which it is enacted is wrong, that the politics that have led to its implementation in Parliament are wrong. The way the Liberal government implemented the Emergencies Act has done a tremendous disservice to Albertans, Canadians, and the rule of law. Canadians and Albertans have seen this gross misuse of powers, and they have made their voices heard along with added pressure from your Alberta government, as has been applied through our courts.

I would like to say thank you to all Canadians and Albertans. Thank you for your work. We have caused the Liberal government and their NDP supporters to cave as they were caught in this unlawful grab of power. Just this past afternoon we have seen them hastily rescind the Emergencies Act before the Senate could even finish debating. This shows their cowardice to allow the courts and the highest offices in the country to rule on the legality and legitimacy of the implementation of this democracy-eroding act. They know they had no foundation to implement it. They did it to take the rights away from everyday, law-abiding citizens that protest peacefully, and they did this just because they oppose the Liberal and NDP agenda.

It's interesting to see them rescind it so quickly as an attack happened at the Coastal GasLink site. This shows a double standard as some of these protesters who have done nothing but stick around and stand up for their rights and freedoms have had swifter actions taken against them than the defence of our own natural resources.

It is on this basis, Mr. Speaker, that I ask both my colleagues in the government and my colleagues among the members opposite to send a firm message from Alberta to the Prime Minister and his cabinet that our great province treasures dearly not only our inherent freedoms but also the rationality that makes our society one of the rule of law. Without it, we will find ourselves remarkably astray.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. members, on Government Motion 10, are there others?

Seeing none, I am prepared to call the question.

[The voice vote indicated that Government Motion 10 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 9:35 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

The Speaker: Hon. members, a division has been called on Government Motion 10, but prior to calling that division, I wanted to give members of the Assembly the opportunity. Pursuant to Government Motion 9 all members are required to be in their seat for divisions. Again, happy to provide members the opportunity to shuffle around the Chamber should they be required to do so.

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Aheer	LaGrange	Reid
Allard	Loewen	Rowswell
Armstrong-Homeniuk	Madu	Rutherford
Copping	Neudorf	Sawhney
Ellis	Nicolaides	Schulz
Frey	Nixon, Jeremy	Shandro
Glubish	Orr	Smith
Hanson	Panda	Yao
Horner	Rehn	

Against the motion:

Dach	Feehan	Sabir
Deol	Irwin	Sweet
Eggen	Phillips	

Totals:	For – 26	Against – 8
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[Government Motion 10 carried]

The Speaker: The hon. deputy government whip.

Mr. Rutherford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the Assembly adjourn until 1:30 p.m., Thursday, February 24, 2022.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 9:53 p.m.]

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