
Will Someone Explain to the PM the Meaning of “Quick and Peaceful”?

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After dallying around Africa and Europe for a week while Canada’s railroads were being shut down by an assortment of political activists across the country and pipeline protestors in northern BC, Prime Minister Trudeau finally headed home, saying he wanted a “quick and peaceful” solution to the impasse. The “quick” part of that should have happened the day the first illegal rail blockade was set up on February 6.¹ In fact, it should have begun on January 1, the day after a court injunction was granted to Coastal Gas Link (CGL) to be able to proceed with development of their pipeline. The time for a “quick” solution is long past.

To allow any group to illegally block a rail line or other transportation corridor is to condone anarchy and lawlessness. To allow those anarchistic elements to entrench themselves in multiple locations—to build camps, to defy orders to disperse, to shut down a significant part of our nation’s transportation system, to disrupt travel plans and the distribution of goods for what is now close to two weeks—is unconscionable.

How about the “peaceful” part of the PM’s wishful thinking? The fact that there have been no significant injuries so far is a miracle and we are grateful for that. However, when “peace” is obtained by allowing lawbreakers to dictate the terms, so that law-abiding citizens cannot travel and work, that is a false “peace”. It’s kind of like a “peaceful” bank robbery. As long as nobody interferes and nobody gets hurt, you could say it was “sort of peaceful”. But the kind of peace Canadians deserve is a true peace under the law. Canada’s Charter of Rights and Freedoms is based in part on the principle of the “rule of law”.² That means that every Canadian citizen should be able to expect equal protection and equal treatment under the law, not kid-gloves treatment based on race or political affiliation.

Any other Canadian obstructing rail traffic and refusing to move would be arrested immediately by law enforcement officers and charged with a crime. Many times, pro-life protesters standing peacefully on a sidewalk have been arrested, handcuffed and hauled away in about 30 minutes, just for holding signs protesting the killing of the pre-born. These quiet protestors are not obstructing traffic on the sidewalk nor preventing anyone from going about their business. They certainly are not interfering with rail traffic, access to ports, bridges and legislature buildings. Although they pose no threat to anybody, these peaceful, respectful, non-violent protestors receive real jail sentences. Linda Gibbons, a brave witness for life who has never interfered with access to a clinic, has spent over 10 years in jail for her silent protests. Where is the justice?

These rail blockades, in contrast, have already cost Canadians and Canadian companies millions of dollars, have disrupted production and travel schedules and inconvenienced tens of thousands of taxpaying Canadians who just want to go about their business.³ It is not only illegal; it’s rude and thoughtless. The government’s failure to enforce the law is already creating chaos and uncertainty for

families and for the business community. To try to negotiate while rail lines are blocked and businesses are losing millions of dollars is to reward lawbreakers and to proclaim to potential investors that Canada is not a safe place to do business. Who would want to invest in Canada's energy industry if the law can be broken without consequences?

One also wonders how all those protestors are able to hang around for days, doing nothing but interfering with other peoples' everyday work and travel. Are they self-employed? Are any of them receiving money from the government? Are there outside interests like billionaire George Soros who are funding the disruptions? It troubles me to think that the same kind of people who support the Liberal government and every eco-terrorist and random, socialist, leftwing cause are subsidizing a cross-country effort to dismantle Canada's energy sector and create a two-tiered justice system based on race, gender ideology and political motives.

To be fair, the federal government and provincial governments have dragged their feet for far too long (centuries) in negotiating reasonable, fair and just settlements with the descendants of indigenous peoples. Many of BC's First Nations are still without treaties and operate under a hodge-podge of benefit and land-use agreements and applications of the outdated Indian Act.⁴ The very nature of local governance is obviously unresolved; elected band councils are often more willing to negotiate agreements with industry and government than are the hereditary chiefs, who still feel a responsibility for the territories in which they live. No federal government has yet had the integrity and courage to initiate new negotiations with everything on the table and a serious commitment to resolve outstanding issues and create a Canada where old wounds can be healed and where all citizens are treated equally.

Here we are in the midst of a national crisis; it is not the time for frantic, short-sighted negotiations. Now is the time for the Government of Canada to renew its commitment to the rule of law. Canada must not reward mob rule and bully tactics nor pay a ransom for our hijacked rail transportation system. May God give wisdom and understanding to the leaders on all sides of this debate. Perhaps by the time this article is printed, there will be a resolution. Until we see the trains moving again and public access restored, we must not be complacent. Canadians—including indigenous citizens, many of whom support the pipeline and want to go back to work—deserve better than this.

Footnotes

¹ globalnews.ca/news/6560125/timeline-wetsuweten-pipeline-protests/

² Preamble to Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms: "Whereas Canada is founded on principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law..."

³ www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/rail-shutdown-propane-supply-runs-low-maritimes-1.5465865

⁴ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Status_of_First_Nations_treaties_in_British_Columbia