

Temporary Crisis, Permanent Power-Grab

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Extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures—but crises are temporary and so the solutions should also be temporary. Emergencies such as wars and pandemics are times when we must accept some new limits on our liberties, but these limits ought not last any longer than absolutely necessary!

Our government just made an opportunistic grab for more powers than necessary, for longer than necessary, while most citizens and MPs were powerless to hold them back.

All of the political parties officially recognized in Parliament had generally been in agreement that new aid measures would be needed to help businesses and individuals deal with the shutdown of most of the economy at this time. There has been widespread goodwill among provincial premiers and the Prime Minister about the necessity to enact measures to stop the spread of the virus, and also the need for economic aid in various forms. Setting aside partisan interests and acting cooperatively is what we should expect of our politicians in times like these.

But, that does not mean that all MPs and parties should agree on the specific details of relief measures without looking things over carefully—nor should they give up their constitutional powers!¹

It seems that goodwill had partially blinded the Conservatives to the faults of the (Liberal) Government's new measures, which included a long-lasting power-grab.² Thankfully, one Conservative MP, Scott Reid, saw that much more was at stake than a few billion dollars; the very ability for Parliament to do its job properly was being co-opted by the proposed measures, and he spoke out.³ This caused his party to have to take a second look and at least partially rein in⁴ the out-of-control proposed measures.

These proposed measures would have given Trudeau's cabinet unprecedented powers; former Finance Minister Joe Oliver⁵ wrote: "Under cover of the COVID-19 emergency, the Liberal government intended to present a bill granting the Minister of Finance power to borrow, spend and raise taxes, bail out companies and guarantee pools of debt, all without Parliamentary approval, until the end of 2021"

Notice, not till the end of 2020, but 2021! What a brazen attempt at near-absolute power when the country was in expectation of goodwill and respectful parliamentary cooperation.

Even Liberal Party supporters should be a little suspicious of a government that proposes sweeping new powers in many areas during a pandemic. This has bad optics regardless of whether government's intentions were pure (and it is increasingly hard to attribute pure motives to this government).

It is beyond excuse that the Liberal Government would use this occasion of trust and cooperation to try to snatch more power for themselves—or for cabinet, specifically—but that seems to be what they have tried to do. It looks like they saw a big crisis, and immediately "reverted to their type"⁶ (as John Robson

put it) and tried to gain dictatorial powers. They overreached and were thwarted, but all Canadians have been served warning — our government is power-hungry!

A government that is power-hungry will not easily be stopped, and Canadians ought to vote them out decidedly for this breach of trust. Don't let them get away with it. Write letters to your editor, email friends and family. Don't give up the ideals of freedom, democracy, and representative government even in times of crisis. Indeed, it seems that—with Liberals in particular—we must be on particularly heightened guard.

The number of columnists from many different news outlets who condemned these actions to one degree or another has been quite encouraging; it shows that free speech and honest criticism of government are not quite dead in Canada, but again, we have been warned to be vigilant.

CHP continues to promote responsible representative government. We will continue to constructively criticize our government and warn Canadians of dangers posed to our lives, families, and freedoms. Please join⁷ and support CHP in our ongoing efforts.

Footnotes

¹ ottawasun.com/opinion/columnists/lilley-we-cant-shred-the-constitution-to-fight-the-virus/

² nationalpost.com/opinion/chris-selley-cheers-to-parliamentary-supremacists-whose-lonely-struggles-are-not-entirely-in-vain

³ scottreid.ca/why-i-am-in-the-house-today/

⁴ thepostmillennial.com/opposition-parties-reach-deal-with-government-trudeau-backs-down

⁵ torontosun.com/opinion/columnists/oliver-trudeau-just-tried-to-overturn-the-election-results

⁶ nationalpost.com/opinion/john-robson-on-covid-19-we-revert-to-type-in-a-crisis-trudeau-reverted-to-authoritarian

⁷ www.chp.ca/get-involved/

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