



NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Vancouver, BC

Day 1

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EVIDENCE

Witness 4: Dr. Matthew Cockle

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Wayne Lenhardt

The next witness is going to be Dr. Matthew Cockle. Could you give us your full name and spell it for us and then I'll do an oath with you.

Dr. Matthew Cockle

Yes, my name is Matthew Evans Cockle, M-A-T-T-H-E-W, Evans, E-V-A-N-S, Cockle, C-O-C-K-L-E.

Wayne Lenhardt

You may have to get the microphone a little bit closer to you so that this can all be recorded.

Dr. Matthew Cockle

Better?

Wayne Lenhardt

Go ahead yes.

Dr. Matthew Cockle

Is that good?

Wayne Lenhardt

Good, okay. Dr. Matthew Cockle, do you swear that the testimony you'll give today will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

Dr. Matthew Cockle

I do.

Wayne Lenhardt

I gather you're a professor at the moment. Could you maybe give us a little background on what you do and your qualifications?

Dr. Matthew Cockle

I don't teach at a university. I teach kids privately. My PhD is from UBC. I'm a Renaissance and Reformation specialist, and my masters from the University of Paris and the École Pratique des attitudes in History of Religions. I've been working with the Canadian COVID Care Alliance for a year and a half, two years, with Deanna McCleod and Liam Sturgess and many others in the external communications committee.

Wayne Lenhardt

I gather you're going to talk about conflict of interest and advancing the public good. So I'm just going to perhaps let you proceed and turn you loose, and if I have anything that I think needs clarifying, I'll just pop in briefly.

Dr. Matthew Cockle

Sounds good. All right, so advancing the public good or promoting cultural barbarism. What are good schools for?

The other day, a friend and I were discussing the talk that I would give here at the National Citizens Inquiry and with her talent for powerfully concise formulations, she provided what I think is a perfect introduction to my topic. When we turned to discuss universities, she said something along these lines: when I think about our universities, I can't help thinking about their sad and harmful failure over the past three years.

Since March 2020, they have failed to provide public access to much-needed information, and they've failed to foster and host balanced debate about the decisions being taken and the policy measures being implemented in response to COVID-19. It's not like these decisions and policies were of no public significance and, therefore, somehow beneath academic discussion.

On the contrary, these decisions and policies threatened all aspects of society, economic and political, social and cultural, education and health. These decisions and policies suspended and sometimes extinguished rights: They forced mass submission to medical experimentation; they destroyed small businesses; they mandated loss of employment and disentanglement to employment insurance; they denied timely access to medical diagnosis; they denied access to medical treatment, including access to early or effective COVID treatment; they criminalized non-compliance and lawful opposition; and they denied access to effective remedies and to due process.

In relation both to COVID-19 and our national and provincial policy response to COVID, our universities could have provided public access to much-needed balanced evidence-based information. Our universities could have provided forums for balanced interdisciplinary public debate. Instead, our universities bullied, suspended, and fired faculty who questioned or criticized.

Wayne Lenhardt

Dr. Cockle, in the interest of partly our time, I think perhaps if you could maybe sort of summarize a bit rather than just reading from your script as to what your points are and that will give us an opportunity also to jump in.

Dr. Matthew Cockle

I can only read. I've done a great deal of work here to bring this together, and I absolutely can't just summarize on the fly.

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It's hard. Okay. I can try.

Wayne Lenhardt

I understand. I've been an academic myself prior to going into law, but I think in this forum, I think it would work much better.

Dr. Matthew Cockle

So when we think about our universities, there are two things that spring to mind. First, we think that our universities are there to advance the public good. And second, they're there to make great strides forward by fostering specialized knowledge. We generally, as Canadians, we think of universities acting towards advancing the public welfare, towards promoting societal health and well-being. Now, few people will deny the incredible benefit that we've drawn from this, but there are harms associated with this specialization.

Wayne Lenhardt

Do you regard COVID as a scientific type of an issue or do you regard it as more of a cultural type of thing or both? What I'm trying to do is home in on your topic, advancing the public good. I'm an old analytic philosopher. What do we mean by that? How are we advancing the public good, and how have they not done that if that's the case here? And now you talk about conflicts of interest, and I'm sure there are tons of them involved in this.

Dr. Matthew Cockle

We can go right into conflicts of interest, but I'll have to follow some notes for this. So taking Dr. Shelly Deeks. She is the current chair of Canada's National Advisory Committee on Immunization [NACI] and very early on in the pandemic, she received a 3 point [sic][3.5] million dollar grant as part of the Canadian Immunization Research Network's [CIRN] COVID-19 vaccine readiness program. The CIRN grant was issued several months before there was any randomized control data available, yet it seems to have presupposed that mRNA vaccines were the only viable answer to COVID-19. This was a precipitous conclusion aligned with the interests of global organizations involved in setting Canada's national research priorities.

Now one such organization is GloPID-R, the Global Research Collaboration for Infectious Disease Preparedness, and in a promotional video, they refer to themselves as "GloPID-R, the global coalition of research funders." On the GloPID-R website, we read that members of our global coalition are funding organizations investing in research related to new or re-emerging infectious diseases that share the goal objectives and commitments of GloPID-R.

Now clearly, the primary investors in research related to new or re-emerging infectious diseases are likely to be pharmaceutical corporations, and indeed as one of its developmental milestones, GloPID-R created its industry stakeholder group in October 2017. In their own words, “GloPID-R members agreed on the importance to reach out to industrial pharmaceutical corporations to increase the efficiency of the global response to outbreaks.” In order to achieve this objective, they discussed the best way forward and decided to set up a specific industry stakeholder group.

So this organization, GloPID-R, played a key role in coordinating the pandemic response and research efforts internationally. It coordinates research funding that advances research and development of pharmaceutical products with a major focus on vaccine development. In addition to its industry stakeholder group, the membership of GloPID-R includes both the World Health Organization, GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, alongside 30 other private organizations and public institutions among which many national research councils and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

I think most Canadians would find it somewhat startling that the research priorities adopted for Canada’s COVID-19 response were largely set in the global COVID-19 research roadmap, developed and published in March 2020 as a collaboration between this global pharma-backed research organization that prioritized vaccine research and the WHO R&D blueprint team.

Fortunately, no one has to take my word for it. We can read the words of Charu Kaushic, the Scientific Director of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research,

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Institute of Infection and Immunity [III].

She also happens to be at the same time, the chair of GloPID-R. She has written a letter published on the CIHR website entitled, Message from the Scientific Director: The CIHR response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this letter, we read:

Since the beginning of this pandemic, Canadian science and scientists have shown tremendous leadership nationally and internationally. In February, CIHR, Canadian III researchers and leading health experts from around the world participated in a World Health Organization [WHO]–Global Research Collaboration for Infectious Disease Preparedness [GloPID-R] joint meeting in Geneva to assess knowledge, identify gaps and work together to accelerate priority research to stop the outbreak. Shortly thereafter, CIHR and other federal agency partners launched a Government of Canada rapid research response, and the response from the Infection and Immunity community was remarkable. This resulted in a total investment of \$52.6M to support 96 research projects across the country to rapidly detect, manage and reduce the transmission of COVID-19

As a result of working closely with GloPID-R and the ongoing coordination from WHO, we have seen [Charu Kaushic writes for the CIHR], unprecedented levels of international cooperation between

funding agencies and international researchers in the response to COVID-19.

So in this letter, Charu Kaushic, the Scientific Director within the CIHR Institute of Infection and Immunity, refers to CIHR Canadian III researchers.

Again, reading from CIHR's own website:

... these initiatives ... offer funding opportunities related to identified priority areas. Each of these initiatives involves collaboration between the Institutes and a wide range of partner organizations, including:

- other federal and provincial government ... [organizations]
- international, national and provincial funding organizations, and relevant territorial departments
- health charities
- non-governmental organizations [such as the WHO and]
- industry [such as Pfizer]

The purpose of these initiatives is to offer funding opportunities focusing on a specific research agenda.

The problem here is we're taking great strides to advance science without similar attention being taken to advance humane governance and to limit destructive excess.

The CIHR is deeply entrenched in a program of global public-private partnerships that allow extremely powerful private interest to play a major role in setting Canada's research agenda. The \$3.5 million grant received by NACI chair, Dr. Shelly Deeks, to encourage COVID-19 vaccine readiness, fits neatly into this larger framework of a research agenda set by global interests.

Again and again and again throughout the documents that I've read in preparing this talk, one sees the assumption that by quite simply continuing full speed ahead according to the research priorities identified and funded by global coalitions of research funders, one will be making significant contributions to the public good and that one's industry in advancing these select research priorities, provided by public-private global partnership organizations, is deserving of heartfelt thanks in and of itself.

As an example of such bizarrely naive assumptions of altruism, we can read the title of an article published on the CIHR website. The article appears to be written as an introduction to Dr. Scott Halperin, nominated principal investigator with the Canadian Immunization Research Network and Director of the Canadian Centre for Vaccinology.

The title reads, "Heralded as one of the greatest medical breakthroughs of modern times, why are proven-effective vaccines suddenly getting such a bad rap?" The title hyphenates the word proven and effective to create a compound word and the compound word then represents the conclusion that vaccines have indeed been proven effective.

On the face of it, this sounds absurd. How have all vaccines been proven effective? But then, too, if one wanted to argue that not all vaccines are effective, the author might counter by saying, "Yes, but here we're only referring to the ones that are proven effective, hence the hyphen."

So as we read the published material on these official Government of Canada websites, we might get the impression that there's considerable effort being made to obscure matters of importance and to present information in an intentionally misleading manner. By way of illustration, another bit of tricky phrasing can be found at the end of the first paragraph on the same page to which I've just referred.

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"Dr. Scott Halperin," we read, "has dedicated his career to inspiring confidence amongst Canadians, that the most effective way to prevent the spread of infectious diseases continues to be through vaccination. By demonstrating the judicious testing that each vaccine undergoes before being introduced into publicly funded immunization programs, Dr. Halperin is combating misinformation with fact, reassuring us that the decision to vaccinate ourselves and our children is a wise one."

In these two sentences we're confronted with just a barrage of assumptions.

First, that vaccination is the most effective way to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Second, that as this continues to be the case, it has been so for a good long time and therefore is a settled matter of scientific fact not open to dispute. Third, that each and every vaccine introduced into publicly funded immunization programs is subject to judicious testing. Fourth, that the decision to vaccinate ourselves and our children is wise. And because there is no context given, the suggestion is that it is always wise, presumably because of the judicious testing upon which we can always rely. And fifth, that anything which might shake one's assurance in the wisdom of vaccinating oneself and one's children is misinformation.

So all across the board, we see that Canadian researchers are being encouraged to simply assume that whatever work they do, so long as they're advancing the research priorities set within the established global research agenda, they're doing the right thing.

We might reflect that it's not advisable to separate the pursuit of specialized knowledge from the service of the public good. But here we see that our researchers are not doing this—at least they don't think they are. They're encouraged at every possible turn to believe that they're altruistic agents whose industry is unquestionably being directed towards the general health and well-being of Canadians. And there's a powerful and familiar idea at work here.

When we say that we want our children to go to good schools, we mean we want them to flourish, we want them eventually to be esteemed by their fellows, we want them to be valued in professions and in the roles they go on to play in their careers. And when we say good school, we tend to assume that the school in and of itself is already fulfilling such an important socially beneficial role, that the mere fact of entering the good school, you're already contributing, you're already doing good for your fellows, and this is a very common assumption.

And I think we see a very similar assumption being promoted in relation to all those participating in Canadian Institutes of Health Research initiatives on these official government website pages. Now it's a wonderful assumption to make if it's true. So long as it's true, it's wonderful to be able to make the assumption that our good schools are doing good. And this is why we say good for you, worthy endeavors. And they are. They're worthy

so long as the good school isn't actually doing anything unlawful, unethical, or contrary to the public good.

So when I read Charu Kaushic, the Scientific Director within the CIHR Institute of Infection and Immunity, I might be inclined to take her at her word when she says, "I know each one of us is trying our hardest to contribute in every way we can, whether it is being a source of authentic information to counteract all the misinformation that is out there, providing sound advice on infection prevention and control, or discussing the scientific evidence on social distancing, latest therapeutics, testing, and vaccines."

When I read her saying these words, I'm tempted to believe her. I'm tempted to believe that she believes what she's saying. And I'm tempted to believe this, that she's in earnest, even though social distancing and masking recommendations were never anywhere near constituting sound evidence-based advice on infection prevention and control, even though there is no scientific evidence that social distancing was effective, even though relatively little and poorly designed research was done into therapeutic treatments for COVID-19, particularly those like hydroxychloroquine, even though it was manifestly clear from the beginning that the mRNA COVID-19 genetic vaccines hadn't even come close to meeting reasonable testing criteria.

So why am I inclined to believe that Charu Kaushic believes what she is writing, in spite of what might strike one as its manifest absurdity? Well, I think it's entirely possible that she believes the system as a whole because it is so wonderfully powerful and productive, because the sky is the limit when it comes to all that we can accomplish that she believes the system is necessarily and assuredly good.

When Charu Kaushic writes to the collective community of the CIHR,

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when she writes to every one of you, "my heartfelt thanks," she's giving clear expression, whether she really believes it or not, to the idea that their participation in any and all CIHR projects is itself an entirely unproblematic ethical good: something to be lauded, something worthy of spontaneous yet profound respect. What we're dealing with then is a rather sophisticated "get-out-of-responsibility-free" card.

If I am a Canadian researcher engaged in top-level research for initiatives funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research or if I am engaged in research with one of the network organizations under the umbrella of the Canadian Immunization Research Network, then I know in my heart that the work I'm doing is good. It has to be good because the CIHR and the CIRN are public institutions of the highest calibre. They aren't predatory corporations. They exist merely to serve the public good and advance the cutting edge of scientific research on behalf of all Canadians. Well, it feels good, but is it real?

What I do know is that Charu Kaushic can't quite use this line of reasoning to absolve herself of responsibility. And the reason is, in her role as the Scientific Director for CIHR III, and this is from a government website, Dr. Kaushic is responsible for making investment decisions nationally and internationally and representing "CIHR and the Government of Canada at various national and international forums related to infectious diseases," and at the same time, in this very same capacity, she serves as the Chair of GloPID-R, the global consortium of funders in pandemic preparedness and emergency response research.

So it's possible that a great many well-meaning Canadian researchers are operating under the impression that the work they're doing must be good because the CIHR and CIRN are public institutions that function altruistically. It might be possible for many such well-meaning Canadian researchers to imagine that the CIHR and CIRN are so constituted that they will not and perhaps even cannot function in the manner of predatory, profit-driven corporations.

If this is the case, if it's true that many Canadian researchers possess such a view of these powerful public institutions, Charu Kaushic is very unlikely to share their candy-coated illusions because as Scientific Director within the CIHR Institute of Infection and Immunity, Kaushic is involved with the CIHR's Global Governance Research on Infectious Disease initiative.

From the CIHR's own website, the CIHR Institute of Population and Public Health and Institute of Infection and Immunity have been leading efforts to build an international network for social science research on infectious diseases that will be supported by a central coordinating hub funded by the European Commission through its Horizon 2020 work program.

The intention of the international network is for participating funders to establish the support centres, initiatives, or networks within their own jurisdictions, which will then be networked internationally through the EC-funded central coordinating hub. This international network of networks will facilitate bigger and more robust scientific inquiries that respond to the needs of global policymakers. This international network is intended to facilitate policy relevant opportunities, networking, cross-country learning, bigger science, and knowledge transition opportunities.

The point that needs to be driven home here is that, given the state of our current national research bodies, it's very unlikely that they're representing anything like what the average Canadian imagines as the public good.

Not only are our Canadian national research bodies correlating their research with the priorities set out in the WHO and GloPID-R's coordinated global research roadmap, but our public CIHR is actively contributing to global governance programs that will facilitate the transfer of its national decision-making agency as a Canadian public institution into the hands of global public-private partnership organizations.

Rather heroically, the CIHR website refers to its leading efforts to build an international network of networks. Nowhere does the CIHR mention the goal of securing bigger profits for the corporate stakeholders who stand to gain from these publicly funded webworks.

No, according to the CIHR, the international network of networks just promises bigger science. There's similarly no mention of profits on the GloPID-R site. The overriding aim of our work, they say, "is to impact global health by saving lives.

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"To coordinate the work of funders, we are active on several fronts."

But as a reminder of the mode of operations one might expect from GloPID-R's industry stakeholder group, we could take a quick peek at the United States Department of Justice website under the heading, "Justice Department announces largest health care fraud settlement in its history: Pfizer to pay \$2.3 billion for fraudulent marketing." In this press

release, dated Wednesday, September 2nd, 2009, we read, “American pharmaceutical giant Pfizer Inc. and its subsidiary have agreed to pay \$2.3 billion, the largest health care fraud state settlement in the history of the Department of Justice, to resolve criminal and civil liability arising from the illegal promotion of certain pharmaceutical products.”

The press release quotes Tony West, the Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Division, as saying that “illegal conduct and fraud by pharmaceutical companies puts the public health at risk, corrupts medical decisions by health care providers, and costs the government billions of dollars.”

It quotes Mike Loucks, then acting U.S. Attorney for the District of Massachusetts, as saying, “The size and seriousness of this resolution, including the huge criminal fine [of \$1.3 billion], reflect the seriousness and scope of Pfizer’s crimes. Pfizer violated the law over an extensive period of time. Furthermore, at the very same time Pfizer was in our office negotiating and resolving the allegations of criminal conduct by its then newly acquired subsidiary, [Warner-Lambert], Pfizer was itself in its other operations violating those very same laws. Today’s enormous fine demonstrates that such blatant and continued disregard of the law will not be tolerated.”

Now why would Canadian public institutions want to get into bed with corporations that demonstrate blatant and continued disregard of the law? Does the Canadian public believe it’s worthwhile to give up the autonomous governance of our national research programs and to partner with corporations that pay out billions in healthcare fraud settlements just for the sake of bigger science?

So over the course of the pandemic, it’s the declared pandemic, we’ve assumed that, well, at least our legacy media and our national public broadcaster have worked overtime to create the impression that the COVID-19 response in Canada has been led by independent scientists and elected representatives whose primary motivation has been to promote public welfare.

In reality, our COVID-19 response has been largely directed by individuals and corporations with ideological and financial interests independent of and in some cases contrary to public welfare. These individuals and corporations have guided pandemic policy in order to ensure outcomes in line with their own private interests with little regard to the general well-being of Canadians. And here, speaking generally, we’re talking about public-private partnerships.

Public institutions are rooted in the public sphere. They tend to have laudable goals, mission statements, and mandates clearly aligned with the constant underlying purpose of serving and protecting the public good. Increasingly, however, of the past decades and most acutely during this declared pandemic, leading figures within our public institutions, like Charu Kaushic, have chosen to engage in partnerships with private sector entities. And as a result of these choices, public institutions have become to greater or lesser degree dependent upon external and private sources of funding. In doing so, they’ve compromised the integrity of these public institutions whose intended purpose is to promote the public welfare. Additionally, though, they’ve normalized, they’re in the process of normalizing the public-private partnership model.

On the face of it, public-private partnerships sound good. It sounds like we’re all pulling together towards a common set of goals. But when it comes to the interests of powerful corporations capable of exerting influence on a global scale, there’s little evidence that their interests ever meaningfully intersect in positive, healthy, and peaceful ways with the interests of the average global citizen.

It should be an ever-present consideration for anyone advocating on behalf of the public good that it's absolutely essential that public institutions remain independent from the private sphere, particularly when one is dealing with public regulatory bodies. It's vital that the regulatory body remain independent of the private sector industries they regulate.

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But they must also remain independent of any overreaching state and federal bodies that might themselves be leveraged by private sector interests. Over the course of the declared pandemic, the most obvious and flagrant example of private sector influence upon the public regulatory bodies as well as upon public organizations more generally is the influence exerted by our pharmaceutical industry.

Pharmaceutical companies have a clear mandate to pursue financial gain. Their primary goal is to increase shareholder profit and investment. And it's not in their mandate, it's not a marketplace requirement, it's not even a marketplace expectation that they determine the nature of the public good, let alone promote or protect it.

The COVID-19 crisis presented global corporations, including pharmaceutical companies, with an unprecedented opportunity to consolidate their wealth and power. And the transfer of wealth that has taken place, a transfer from the working class to the global billionaire elite, has been measured in the trillions. According to a recent Oxfam report, the richest 1 per cent grabbed nearly two-thirds of all new wealth worth 42 trillion created since 2020, almost twice as much money as the bottom 99 per cent of the world's population. So it's worked for them. The pandemic has worked very well for them. It's gone off without a hitch.

At the same time, the COVID-19 crisis has presented the global public with an opportunity to see just how much power the corporate sector can wield. We've seen its ability to influence public organizations, including regulatory bodies. We've seen its ability to direct the emergency response, including the legislative processes of sovereign governments. And through the hold it has upon legacy media and the new social media platforms, we've seen the influence it's able to exert in shaping the understanding of and the reaction to these policies in populations around the globe.

In other words, we've observed that there are corporate power structures ready, willing, and entirely able to shape global government policies, and then to shape the global response to the policies they're promoting. Policies, ostensibly in service of the public welfare, but manifestly serving to increase the wealth, power, and finally control of these corporations over an increasingly captured public sphere.

So where does this lead?

Now I'd say that where this leads is a state of cultural barbarism as a new norm. But the word "barbarism" poses a problem just because we have two sort of definitions floating around. There's the language-based definition that refers to the Greek term barbarous. And the barbarian is someone who when they talk, it just sounds like bar, bar, bar. We don't understand what they're saying. It's a foreign tongue. But when we say barbarian, when we say barbarism, what we mean is someone who chooses domination over empathy. We mean the inclination to use violence and coercion to persuade others to do as we wish. But these two definitions, they're related. And this is really the crux of what I wanted to say here today. These two definitions of barbarism are related by the idea of specialization.

To illustrate, I'll very shortly have a look at scholastics in the Renaissance, if that's all right. So the term barbarism gets used in an interesting way by Erasmus around the end of the 1400s when he refers to the scholastic doctors of theology, the doctors of divinity in the theological schools. And he calls them barbarians because they don't speak Greek. And why is that important? Well, it's important because the New Testament, the Bible that they're interpreting, is written in Greek. And it's not written in Attic Greek. It's not written in a very high Greek for the educated. It's written in what's called Koine Greek,

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marketplace Greek: Greek that's accessible to anybody at all, anybody who can speak it. If they hear it, they understand it.

So the scholastic doctors of divinity, they're reading their Bible in the Latin translation and it's an ancient translation. So already, it's like how many of us read thousand-year-old English and just understand what we're reading? Not many of us. So it's an ancient text and then on top of this, they developed this really complicated Latin, and they bring in all kinds of new terms so nobody except for them can understand the interpretive process they're using, the interpretive method they're using. And so now, you've got a population that's cut off from the sacred text that apparently is the foundation and wellspring of their sense of what the public good is. And you've got a clique of specialists who can decide for them. And if you can control that clique of specialists, then you can shape expectations in relation to the public good. So that's one part, that's an important part of barbarism—when you have walled off domains of learning, domains of thinking that have real public significance, when you've walled it off from the public.

Now how does this contribute to sort of a cultural barbarism, where you're oppressing others, where this becomes the default mode?

Well, if every domain of learning—we take our universities—every domain has its specialists. So no matter what we're talking about, we're going to defer to the specialists: ask the experts, trust the experts. And maybe those experts will be helpful. But the specialization of all agency—the specialization of knowledge and agency in all domains of human activity—this is a signal for cultural barbarism. And the reason is that the default position now becomes, no matter what the question is, “there are experts who are dealing with it.” And the question should be given to them. And no matter what the problem, it's not my responsibility because I'm not the specialist. It's someone else's responsibility.

Now the universities saw incredibly high compliance with the mandates and with very little debate, which is really shocking to a lot of us. But we can understand it because everybody's deferring to the next specialist. And so when you create a culture like that, you basically, you've laid the foundation. When you have domains of learning and activity that are specialized and you're encouraged to trust the experts rather than coming to your own determinations, then not only are you cut off from the learning and the skill involved in that domain, but you're also cut off from the possibility of taking responsibility in that domain.

A specialized domain is not the responsibility of the non-specialist. What happens, however, when the entire network of human activity has become specialized is that for any given thing, the grand majority of people are not responsible. Not only are they not responsible, but they cannot take responsibility and taking responsibility becomes a question of accreditation.

By creating and legitimizing and normalizing the extraordinary authority of the expert, of the specialist, the university has legitimized the adoption in the general population of a very unhealthy default position: Whatever the matter at hand, it's not my responsibility and that's not a problem. If I trust in the good schools, then I know that whatever the problem, there are experts whose responsibility it is, there are specialists looking into these things, and the specialists looking into these things are the trustworthy product of our trusted universities.

So we have this uncritical acceptance of the idea that universities are a public good and that the specialization in all areas of human inquiry that they cultivate is public good. And as a result of this accepted notion, the default position for individuals is that they're not responsible. And once you've convinced the population that they are justified precisely when they do not take responsibility for important public issues,

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then you open the door to coercive policies and abuse.

You open the door because you've created the conditions for acquiescent acceptance of anything and everything in the general population. They will accept whatever policies are handed down, no matter how oppressive because they know they've been handed down by individuals accredited within a system they trust. They believe that the system is trustworthy because it goes without saying, it represents a public good.

So I think I can wrap up here.

In relation to these reflections, you know, we can all hear the voices of our friends and our family and the legacy media. And they're going to say things like, "Oh, come on, don't you think you're exaggerating a little? How bad can it be? Are you really telling me that we can't trust our universities now? What about our medical journals? Is that next? Are you going to try and tell me that not only our universities, but our public research agencies and the world's leading medical journals are somehow corrupt? Come on, kid, give your head a shake."

And unfortunately, that's exactly where we're at, but it's above my pay grade to say so.

But we don't need me. We've got Richard Horton, he's the Editor-in-Chief of *The Lancet*, one of the world's most highly respected medical journals. And he penned an article on April 11th, 2015. It appeared in *The Lancet*, and it was entitled "Offline: What is Medicine's 5 Sigma?" And it's kind of mind-blowing. It starts like this:

"A lot of what is published is incorrect." I'm not allowed to say who made this remark because we were asked to observe Chatham House rules. We were also asked not to take photographs of slides. Those who worked for government agencies pleaded that their comments especially remain unquoted, since the forthcoming UK election meant they were living in "purdah" —a chilling state where severe restrictions on freedom of speech are placed on anyone on the government's payroll. Why the paranoid concern for secrecy and non-attribution? Because this symposium—on the reproducibility and reliability of biomedical research held at the Wellcome Trust in London last week—touched on one of the most sensitive issues in science today: the idea

that something has gone fundamentally wrong with one of our greatest human creations.

Now in relation to the short series of excerpts that follow, remember that this is the Editor-in-Chief of *The Lancet* speaking about scientific literature. And as he makes no exception for *The Lancet*, we can assume that in writing this, he considers his own journal to be among the offending publications.

Wayne Lenhardt

Could I maybe stop you and just ask a couple of questions from, I think, our perspective?

As you're talking, I'm thinking to myself, you know, maybe the problem is that money is a source of all evil, okay? And universities have incentives built in the same way as corporations have incentives built in. And the incentives that are at the university, I mean, I saw this first time, is that if you're a young academic, the way to make your name and also make more money is to, number one, publish in respectable journals. And that's where you mentioned *The Lancet*, which is a very prestigious journal. So if you're able to get a paper, an academic paper published in *The Lancet*, that's a real feather in your cap and you're apt to go up from associate professor to full professor, your salary will go up, your prestige goes up, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

So if you have globalists behind some sort of a pandemic, it's useful for them to have academic credentials for their shot, whatever it is. So it's in their interest then to try to corrupt the system in some of the better universities. And it's not that difficult to do in the sciences, in the hard sciences: one of the ways you go up as a young professor is to attract a bunch of research grants. So all of a sudden, I've collected 20 million in research grants, but my little competitor,

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professor over here, has got 100 million. So he's going to go up faster than I will. And that leads to all kinds of abuses, some of which have been uncovered.

You know, there was a professor at Memorial University in Newfoundland that was falsifying results. It actually happened in Duke of all places where also they ended up retracting, I think, a dozen papers and firing this guy, who was actually making up his test results. But it happens everywhere. I mean, *The New York Times* had a guy 20 years ago, I recall, who had actually fabricated a news story about an eight-year-old drug addict in Atlanta. He sat in his apartment for a week, and it was pure fiction, and he passed it off as being real. These are all financial incentives. So I think as far as the university goes, it's certainly not immune from that.

Dr. Matthew Cockle

Richard Horton says poor methods get results.

Wayne Lenhardt

I'm sorry?

Dr. Matthew Cockle

Horton said poor methods get results: the case against science.

Wayne Lenhardt

Sure. Well, East Anglia University was one of the best universities for global warming at one point. Until there was no global warming for 19 years and they tried to hide the decline and somebody hacked their emails. So is this the problem with conflict of interest and advancing the public? But I'll stop. I'm not a witness here, but just trying to wrap your presentation.

Dr. Matthew Cockle

Alright so, okay, I think his comments are a good wrap-up for me if I just can finish that would be great.

Wayne Lenhardt

Maybe this is the good time to ask the commissioners if they have any questions so we can go off on that. Go ahead.

Commissioner Kaikkonen

Good morning. I have a number of questions, and probably not as many, or more than I can ask here. We've heard testimony, as we go across Canada, elaborating on how our institutions have failed Canadians.

And at the same time, we also recognize, or many of us recognize, that our universities have moved away from their original foundations of academic inquiry to this group-think mentality. And I'm thinking, in my own case, groupthink came in around early 2000s.

So where, in your opinion, did universities go off the rails? And this is where I'm going to ask a number of questions.

Do you think the unionization of faculty members has been a contributing factor, where it used to be tenure was a job for life, which allowed the professors to dissent or offer research that was dissenting from the public narrative? Or could it be that the funding agencies, which narrows the perspective as you alluded to, NSERC and SHHRC, where professors who apply for grant funding have to apply within the criteria offered by the federal government?

Or is it simply because the arts and social sciences and humanities have lost their way, as many of us who taught in the arts tried to warn as early as the early 2000s? Or is it because universities have climbed onto the skills-based academic programs and, by extension, given colleges that degree-granting status?

And the reason I ask this is because there's a number of parents right now who are looking at universities as an option for their children. And there are some pluses to universities in terms of academic inquiry and learning how to research and critically think and critically write. And I know it's getting harder to find them, but they still exist.

And I'm just wondering, they went off the rails, or collectively, stereotypically, we say they've gone off the rails as universities go— But at what point did they really go off the

rails that money, as Wayne has alluded to, is the root of all evil, or the love of money is actually the root of all evil? And to the point where we're going to discourage parents from sending their children to universities, when there are some positives there that we should be considering as well.

So just where did they go off the rails? At what point do you, in your opinion, do you think that they stepped out of being a university that included academic integrity,

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to where they are now?

Dr. Matthew Cockle

I think it's right that it's linked to the incentivization process and I think that the damage has been done at the university level and also at the federal and provincial funding levels. By starving universities of federal funding, you open them up to private funding and then by walling off the decision-making committees from the public, in terms of where funds are going to be allocated and for what reasons, you create this sort of culture of secrecy that allows terrible things to happen.

And so way back in the '90s when I was at SFU— Jerry Zasloff had created the Institute for the Humanities, and he created it in the first year, in the year of SFU's inception, I believe. And it was an independent body within the university that was not subject to administrative control. And what that allowed it to do was to operate as a kind of conscience for the university and thank goodness it did. And one of the things it did was that Jerry—and many others in collaboration with many others around Vancouver— organized a public forum, and it was on the persistence of the influences from fascist institutions and Nazi institutions and totalitarian institutions, the persistent influence into the modern day. And one of the panels was on SFU's involvement in Indonesia at the time. So federal funding was coming in to SFU, and SFU was sending engineers into Indonesia to train Indonesian engineers and to boost their engineering program. And at the very same time, Indonesia was in East Timor genociding the East Timorese. Now that's insane.

And while this is happening, the CBC is somehow being leveraged by the federal government, and they come out and they say that they don't think that what's happening in East Timor is newsworthy. So at this panel, there's an archbishop who's seen people slaughtered in the street in front of his church. And then there's John Stubbs, President of the University, who's trying to say, as long as we're advancing education, it's got to be good. And we're advancing engineering in Indonesia, and this is going to be good for the people of Indonesia. And therefore, it's going to be good for everybody that they have anything to do with.

And at one point, there are these two— They look like Indonesian military. They look absolutely terrifying. They're the most terrifying men I've ever seen. They're not sitting together. They're in different parts of the audience. And at different moments of people's testimony, they would get up and they would vociferously maintain that nothing was happening in East Timor. So then John Stubbs, President of SFU, is on their side?

And so what this illustrates is there's clearly a problem when money can be coming from the federal government, and it can be moving through a university, and it can be of such significance that the president of that university can't stop a program from happening even

when it's supporting a genocidal regime in the act of genociding another people. That's mind-boggling.

And I think that we're just further ahead into that process. And so that's why I think that the answer to a lot of this— We have people coming and saying, the problem is socialism. It's not. That's absurd. The problem is our public institutions, which are our bulwarks, they're the things that can protect us, they're the things we need to strengthen, they're being undermined by the private sphere. Of course, they are.

If we see that something is rotten to the core—whether it's the CBC or whatever it is, some public institution—the answer is not to defund it and dismantle it. The answer is to figure out what's wrong: which parties are trying to undermine it; if there are any such parties, what they stand to gain from it; and what we can do to fix it, to heal it, and to strengthen it and protect it from further corruption so that it can actually do a job for us.

Our public institutions are like guards at the gates. We've got a city. You've got seven gates. There are big guards there. And the corporate walls cannot get in. But they bribe the guards and every now and then, they make raids. And now they make more raids. But what they'd love is if they could convince the population in the city's walls to get rid of those guards completely: "The public institutions are the problem.

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"Just scrap them. The private sector will take care of you much better." Well, then you've got no guards and you've got no defence.

And the public owns the public sphere but needs to take it back. Because right now, it's in the hands of networks, coordinated networks, of corporate powers. And they pay a lot of very smart people to strategize how to best go about this process of undermining the public sphere and capturing it.

Commissioner Kaikkonen

So we are going to get a copy of your research paper as evidence, yes?

Dr. Matthew Cockle

I'm sorry. It was the wrong format.

Commissioner Kaikkonen

No, it's okay. I really like it when you speak from the cuff. It's actually very refreshing and enlightening to all of us because you're actually giving us your passion.

You mentioned the New Testament and I'm not sure which direction you were going, so I'm just going to say that "Tindale" or "Tyndale," depending on how people pronounce his name, translated the Greek to English in the New Testament, and he did so, so that every farm boy would have access to the Scriptures. He did it under threat of death. He moved from the U.K. to Europe. They killed him once and then his secretary, Matthew, took over, and they thought he had come back to life, so they dug up his ashes and re-killed him.

I'm just wondering, are we at that place in society where we don't have access to the Scriptures anymore? Are we at that place where censorship has taken such a direction and

influence in our lives that we don't have access to what was or what these people stood for in principles? Or is there still hope for this country?

Dr. Matthew Cockle

Okay. That's a really interesting question. So I don't think that there's any need to privilege one scripture or sacred text over another. I think that a lot of the time we look at some sort of—let's use Trudeau's term fringe—some fringe group whether it's the Wahhabis movement in Islam or some puritanical sect in Christianity, you can find bad people everywhere.

But if you've got a community of people who are using a sacred text and its traditions to try and create an integrated communal identity, and then within that community, you've got individuals who believe that the tradition they've inherited and the text that they're working with actually allow them to sort of own themselves. They are autonomous in their decision to adopt the structures of this tradition. So then, it allows them to become self-possessed. I think that's a very powerful thing.

And I think that what we see in the media now is a wonderfully cunning attack on faith communities of all kinds. And the reason is that whether or not you agree with the tenets or whether or not you're going to go out and buy yourself a Koran and spend a lot of time reading it, you can appreciate that if an entire community is clear on the ethical norms that they wish to live by, boy, it becomes hard to push them around when you've got a corporate agenda and you're pushing through the media and you just want it to go. And they keep getting in the way.

So you have to take measures: You've got to make sure that they're not getting together, so you better close the churches. You can leave Walmart open because the marketplace triumphs, and there's no problem with the marketplace. But you better close the churches. And maybe you close the Christian churches and maybe you leave the synagogues and mosques open so that the faith groups can fight amongst themselves instead of recognizing that what's happening is you've got to move by large corporate powers—they want to take over the public sphere. And they want to take away everything that protects people and allows them to make decisions for themselves because that population is a market and it's valuable as a market.

Commissioner Kaikkonen

And do you have any specific recommendations that will help ordinary hard-working Canadians to combat what is happening in our country?

[01:00:00]

Dr. Matthew Cockle

Well, I think that the direction things are going is very ugly and one of the reasons is what's happened throughout the declared pandemic is people have felt that it's okay to turn their back when other people are excluded and abused.

There are somewhere between 4,000 and 4,500 nurses in BC who have either been terminated or have left the profession because of the vaccine mandate. And one might wonder, why aren't all the other nurses standing with them and standing up for them? It seems ludicrous.

And then when you think about the Hippocratic Oath to do no harm and the sort of ethical investment that we expect of our physicians and then we see that the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC is threatening to take away the licences of any physicians who speak out against the policies, even though it's their fiduciary duty to speak out. If they think that a policy is going to do harm to one of their patients, it's their lawful duty to speak out. And how is it that they're not?

How is it that we've come to this place where, en masse, precisely those professions that we've looked to as the most enlightened or the most ethical have completely failed us. Not that individuals within those professions have failed us because I work with amazing people. That's the great thing about the pandemic is I've met amazing people, and I'm constantly startled by all that they know and I absorb as much as I can. But en masse, this sort of abandonment of our fellows, that's a really dark turn.

Commissioner Kaikkonen

Thank you very much.

Wayne Lenhardt

Dr. Massie.

Commissioner Massie

Thank you very much for your testimony.

I think one of the points you raise in terms of the specialized knowledge and the big science, which from a technology point of view calls for the major investment in facility—if you are going to do, for example, genomic science, high-level sequencing, and that kind of activity, you really need to build infrastructure that not every scientist can actually have in his own lab, but at least would have the ability to access.

So that calls for some sort of governing system that would allow, I would say, a fair access to scientists to the facility in order for them to carry on their research. Somebody has to decide that this project should have more access to the facility than the other, and that's not an easy thing actually to equilibrate in some way in terms of resource allocation and so on. It's always been a struggle, and as you mentioned, the incentive is really driving what behaviour you're going to get from people.

So one of the things I've been struggling with as a scientist over my career is that I'm old enough to have had the pretty good, strong training in humanities. But the new scientists or the younger generation don't seem to have had that opportunity to have this training in humanities that would give them a perspective on ethical principle. That's one thing.

And the other one, which I think is very important is what I call, in this branch of philosophy called epistemology: How do we generate the knowledge that we have? And how does that evolve? And when you do it carefully, you realize that the driving force to get to the truth in science is debate. So any institution that is sort of suppressing debate, how can we think that they're doing that for common good?

So what's your perspective on the so-called common good as a sort of excuse to push a given agenda in those institutions? Isn't that something that will actually affect all of the activity we're doing in university, would it be in science, natural science,

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or other branches of knowledge in university? So what is your thought on that?

Dr. Matthew Cockle

Well, I think that it would be hard to find a department that didn't have ethical standards and that didn't insist that researchers and professors within the department met those standards.

The problem is that those standards aren't being applied to the funding or to the parameters being set by funders. Of course, your question has many parts. One part, the debate part: so how is it possible that universities that are the place of debate—there's no question we associate them with the debate of ideas—how can they not have done that and how can they have so openly and blatantly stifled anybody who wanted to?

I think that they would defer, in BC, UBC would defer to Bonnie Henry, would defer to Adrian Dix, would defer to David Eby and before him, John Horgan. And if John Horgan, if the premier of a province is up there saying these people who are vaccine-hesitant, "well, it's okay to call them covidiotis." Well, if the premier says it, then certainly the university doesn't have to waste any time hearing what these people have to say.

And if Bonnie Henry is up there saying, "I have very little patience for health care workers who don't want to be vaccinated," she's setting the agenda from the top down. And people feel comfortable following the lead of these very important public figures.

How it's happened? I know university professors who simply refuse to think about these things at all in spite— They're brilliant. Some of them are Oxford-educated, there's no question that they're intelligent and capable of critical thinking, but they feel that they're authorized not to look at it. I think that leading by example has done that.

The question of how can we actually make research ethical?

Well, the one way to stop it from being ethical is to allow private stakeholders to meet in closed-door meetings and determine what the agendas are. And you know, GloPID-R and the WHO R&D blueprint team, that's what they did. They created a roadmap, they published it. And then as Charu Kaushic, who is the chair of GloPID and the head of one of our major initiatives within the CIHR, she says that most of the funding was correlated with that roadmap. And she's speaking globally. And you can watch her Cochrane Convenes' keynote speech, where she looks at— They're tracking. They have data tracking systems that not only track what the research priorities are but what research is being done and whether or not it corresponds with those research priorities. So clearly, the goal is control over as much research as possible.

Now you made a great point, it costs money, so we need the private sector to invest. But then pharmaceutical companies have always used that excuse. We spend so much in R&D, but they spend relatively little in R&D compared to their spending in public relations and marketing. The people who spend for the R&D, that's the public institutions. So what they're doing is they're getting help from the public sector, but they're still deciding how

that public sector money is being spent. And if we look at COVID, we spent a lot of money on incredibly costly technology, but perhaps it would have cost very little to work on effective therapeutics. Imagine if we had a national program that had actually followed through

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and done this and looked at maybe inexpensive and readily available generics in combination with vitamin D and other commonly available things that we would expect to use in the treatment of respiratory disease.

I think that we could have done a great deal better with far less investment. And the only difference, the one thing we needed to do to get that better outcome, is not allow the corporate sector to call the shots.

Commissioner Massie

Thank you.

Wayne Lenhardt

Yes, Ken.

Commissioner Drysdale

I want to make sure I understand what you were testifying. CIHR is the Canadian Institute of Health Research. CIRN is?

Dr. Matthew Cockle

Canadian Immunization Research Network.

Commissioner Drysdale

You talked about a number of grants, and just running a number in my mind, it was in 10s to 50 millions of dollars you were talking about that they had set out grants to. What I've heard in the testimony over the last number of weeks and months is that, essentially, the vaccines were researched by the manufacturers, the government was given the information, whenever it was, and within weeks they had somehow authorized the vaccines.

Given that the CIHR, the Canadian Institute of Health Research, was giving out so much money, how much money did they give towards research specifically related to proving the safety and efficacy of the vaccines before they were put out to the Canadian public?

Dr. Matthew Cockle

Well, I certainly don't know the answer, the specific answer, to the amount of money spent in that direction. I do know that there was a great deal of money spent on initiatives to encourage vaccine uptake and those initiatives began well before there was any randomized clinical trial data available.

So we were giving out public money for grants to encourage vaccine uptake before we had the basis to say that they might be safe and effective. It's a very odd thing.

Commissioner Drysdale

That's almost like having your house on fire, but instead of putting your efforts to putting the fire out, you put your efforts toward telling the neighbours about it. The monies that you talked about, the bursaries or grants that you were talking about, more had to do with exactly what you said, the propagandizing, the vaccines, combating vaccine hesitancy, which I hadn't really heard of as a term before now in Canada, which is interesting.

Can you comment on how they would have anticipated that they were going to have this vaccine hesitancy when I wasn't aware of it in Canada at all before now?

Dr. Matthew Cockle

Well there has been a lot of work in the decade leading up to the WHO's declaration of a pandemic. GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, and WHO, I believe they called the past decade the decade of the vaccine.

And there were a tremendous number of global initiatives really pushing the idea that vaccines were the answer. And you can read on the CIHR, on the Government of Canada websites, that vaccines are absolutely the best way to prevent the transmission of infectious diseases.

I'm not sure that that is settled, but it's certainly—you can read it on these Canadian websites as though it is settled.

Commissioner Drysdale

Were you surprised with regard to the change in language? We heard in testimony, I think it was in Red Deer, that the vaccines, and I think they were talking about the Pfizer one, was really ruled a biologic. But they allowed it to be tested under the name vaccine.

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And that the term vaccine that people have come to trust in Canada, like when you think of the smallpox vaccines, that this particular vaccine didn't fall within the definition, so they changed it.

Dr. Matthew Cockle

I think this goes back to this question of who decides what the ethical parameters are for progress within a society and for business as usual. And then, what recourse does the population have?

What we've seen during the pandemic is it doesn't matter how many letters you send to the premier or to the public health officer, you're very unlikely to get a reply. And we have no recourse to challenge these things.

And what we've seen with the introduction of Bill 36, which is the *Health Professions and Occupations Act*, and then fewer people know about the Emergency Act that's been passed in BC, and together with this, the ATP, the Advanced Therapeutics Pathways Program.

Legislation is being introduced in BC that is unlawful and anti-democratic. And some of the things that this legislation does is, with the *Health Professions and Occupations Act*, it allows the minister to appoint people who aren't elected, who don't have to be competent. Competence isn't part of the appointment. And these people are then allowed to change the definitions of words, establish ethical guidelines for treating physicians. They are given the power to suspend a physician's licence, prior to launching an investigation.

There's this all-out attack on individual human rights, and it's blatant and it's ongoing. And one of the strangest aspects of that *Health Professions and Occupations Act* is it would allow under this portal, this public health portal, it would allow legislation to be brought in—like copied and pasted, essentially—brought in wholesale into the legislative framework of BC's laws from other jurisdictions: Switzerland and not only from other jurisdictions but from rule-making bodies.

So that opens it to the WEF, the WHO. Well, what this means is now these— And what is the WEF? It is the world's leading public-private partnership. So it's the public sector overwhelmed, captured, and directed by the private sector. And now they are going to be able to write laws, to have their laws packaged and introduced in BC with no over— They won't pass through the legislative assembly, they may change— Like the *Health Professions and Occupations Act*, it would affect something like 133,000 health care workers in BC. But the changes that this makes, those health care workers have not been consulted.

And that *Health Professions and Occupations Act* was pushed through by David Eby when he closed the legislative assembly one week early. They had only read through something like a fifth, I believe. It was something in the vicinity of 270 pages; it was maybe the largest bill ever introduced in BC. And what David Eby is doing and what Adrian Dix is going along with— Because when you look at Adrian Dix, it looks like this is a man plagued by his conscience. I don't know if that's true, I'm not sure.

When you look at Bonnie Henry, she's cool as a cucumber. I don't know what's going on there, but she's okay with what she's doing. Adrian Dix, maybe not so much. But David Eby, he's a lawyer. He knows what he's doing. I believe that they may even be firing their legal secretaries, their legal staff, the experienced legal staff, to avoid running into obstruction when they introduce things that are absolutely not in the public interest.

Well, that bill was not written in BC. That bill is coming in

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from legal teams. These are being packaged elsewhere.

And I don't think they're being packaged in Saskatchewan. It would look like, if we look at the research funding, it's been coordinated by these global research funding coalitions. And I would assume that these bills are being created also at the global level by interested parties.

And those parties, what are they interested in? Well, they're interested in gaining control over markets. And the markets, you know—we're the market. We think that the public, that that means people like us: people that we don't want bad things to happen to; people whose lives matter; and people we want to thrive as much as possible, we want to protect if we can.

But that's not the way that they're being seen from a global perspective. It's markets. And these markets need to be exploited. It doesn't matter what they're doing with their hair or what shoes they're wearing. None of that matters. And I believe that it's unprecedented in Canada, we've got something like— There are these secret orders in council that the prime minister is able to pass. And I believe that Harper was the one who had passed the most, you know, this walling off the processes, the laws that you're passing. And maybe he passed five or seven. And Trudeau has passed over 70, I believe.

So Canadians can't— We can't find out what is happening. And we can't even get our premier to allow the members of our legislative assembly to properly read and debate the largest bill that's ever been passed, or close to it, in BC's history.

It's ludicrous. And then we think, well, you know, they're good people. They'll fix it. Well, they won't because they're the offenders here.

Commissioner Drysdale

Thank you, sir.

Wayne Lenhardt

Are there any more questions from the Commissioners?

Okay. Dr. Cockle, I want to thank you on behalf of the National Citizens Enquiry for coming and giving your testimony today. Thank you very much.

[01:23:00]

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