



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on Justice, Human Rights, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness

JUST • NUMBER 054 • 1st SESSION • 38th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Thursday, October 20, 2005

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Chair

Mr. John Maloney

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•(1105)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. John Maloney (Welland, Lib.)): I call the meeting to order, please.

We are returning to consideration of Bill C-16, an Act to amend the Criminal Code (impaired driving).

We have back Raf Souccar, assistant commissioner, federal and international operations, with the RCMP. He's joined by Evan Graham, national coordinator of the drug evaluation and classification program, and Derek Ogden, director general of the drugs and organized crime branch.

Thank you very much for coming back. You've already made a presentation to us, so at this time we'll perhaps just go to questions and answers.

Mr. Toews.

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, CPC): Thank you. I have conferred with my colleagues, and we don't have any questions at this time. I would prefer to give the questions over to the Bloc and the NDP, who have some questions.

The Chair: Mr. Marceau or Mr. Lemay.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, BQ): First of all, I'd like to thank the witnesses, Mr. Graham, Mr. Souccar and Mr. Ogden, for being here.

My question is quite straightforward. I won't hide the fact that I have doubts about the applicability of Bill C-16. Do you think it's going to work? Many witnesses have said that it's not very scientific, that there are no 100 per cent reliable tests. Few people have gone so far as to say that the measures provided for in Bill C-16 are going to work.

I assume that you represent the RCMP, not the government. The government has its own officials and a parliamentary secretary who is doing a fine job of defending the government position.

As police representatives, are you able to state that the measures provided for in Bill C-16 would work?

[English]

Assistant Commissioner Raf Souccar (Federal and International Operations, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): Thank you for your question.

First of all, yes, I am here representing the RCMP, but also as the vice-chair of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police drug abuse committee. I feel comfortable in speaking on behalf of law enforcement across Canada.

We are very confident that Bill C-16 will be a step forward. We have to remember that the bill itself has several steps to it. It doesn't stop with a police officer pulling a vehicle over and making a decision as to impairment and having it end there by laying charges.

There is driving evidence, after which then follows perhaps a conversation between the police officer and the driver, standardized field sobriety testing on the side of the road, followed by the drug recognition expert's assessment and interview with the arresting officer as well, and then followed finally by, if necessary—and I say “if necessary” because at any point in time from the violator-officer contact, when the driver is pulled over to the side of the road... It could end right there and the driver could be sent on his way. The driver may have swerved as a result of reaching to pick something up that fell on the floor while driving, causing him to sway, and that may be the end of it.

The standardized field sobriety testing could end it; the drug recognition expert interview and assessment could end it; or if it appears there is in fact impairment throughout the process, then you go to the final stage of getting a sample.

So there are some safety mechanisms along the way to give me the level of comfort that this would work.

The Chair: Mr. Comartin.

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): I have no questions, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Members on the government side, do you have any questions?

Monsieur Lemay.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): First, I'd like to introduce myself. I have been a criminal lawyer for 30 years and have been a defence lawyer. When I read the bill, I had one question.

I'd like to start with a little preamble. I also come from the world of sports. Internationally, we have attempted to impose a requirement for anti-doping tests. In order to do that, blood samples had to be taken. We had great difficulty in many parts of the world, and particularly in Canada, because of sections 7 and 8 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I will come back to that in a few moments.

Under international sports rules, you can analyze what comes out of a human being normally. In order to collect saliva, blood, hair and other samples, you need the athlete's consent. Do you think that Bill C-16 is going to be able to pass the test of the Supreme Court, which has interpreted sections 7 and 8 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms?

Section 7 stipulates the following:

7. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.

Section 8 reads as follows:

8. Everyone has the right to be secure against unreasonable search or seizure.

Perhaps the preamble was a bit long, but I'd like to know whether you have any legal research or opinion establishing that what Bill C-16 provides for could pass the Supreme Court test?

• (1110)

[English]

A/Commr Raf Souccar: As you know, when a piece of legislation is first drafted and makes its way through to this point in time, it goes through various stages, one of which is the constitutional law examination, if you will, by the justice department and so on. At that point they look at the piece of legislation to examine whether it's at risk or not of constitutional challenges.

If I look back at Bill C-24 and section 25.1 of the code, the law enforcement justification, is it a risk or is it not for constitutional challenges? We would know whether it is or not once it makes its way through the courts and courts start rendering decisions. I feel comfortable that this piece of legislation would withstand...and I guess maybe your question should be put to the Department of Justice for a formal opinion on their part, as we don't provide opinions with respect to this piece of legislation. But if you're asking me as a police officer, I feel comfortable enough that this piece of legislation should withstand charter challenges. At this point in time, it's the only means by which we can detect drug-impaired drivers on the road. We have to balance unreasonable search and seizure, section 8 of the charter, versus the dangers, I guess, that are posed to people driving on our roads and highways and how we make those roads and highways safe.

We have no mechanism, such as a breathalyzer, to detect drug-impaired driving. The steps that are taken prior to getting to the point at which we require blood, urine or saliva... It is a gradual progression that I believe would go a long way to finding this piece of legislation constitutional, but that's only my personal view.

The Chair: Any other questions from anyone?

Mr. Cullen.

Hon. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to the witnesses. I have one question for you, Commissioner Souccar.

We often talk about crime and injuries and death to Canadian citizens as a result of various criminal acts. How does impaired driving—people who are killed or injured or seriously maimed because of impaired driving—stack up against the death and injury caused to people as a result of armed robbery or murder? Do you have any statistics on that?

A/Commr. Raf Souccar: I don't have any statistics at this point. Mr. Graham may. I know he has more numbers than I do.

But the purpose and intent of this legislation is to increase the safety of Canadians, of people driving on our roads and highways. I believe 20% of impaired driving is drug-impaired driving. We're trying to minimize that.

We've gone a long way in educating the public on alcohol-impaired driving, as I believe I testified during my last appearance here. Kids seem to be more sensitive to drinking and driving. There are fewer people drinking and driving and there are more designated drivers. But there's a bit of confusion with respect to toking and driving, for example. Kids are more likely to toke and drive than drink and drive.

So it's a step to try to balance off the risks on the highways, as well as the need to increase the education component relative to taking drugs and driving.

• (1115)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Toews.

Mr. Vic Toews: One of the approaches the Americans have taken—and I'm not suggesting you are an expert in this—is that because of the problem with trying to determine drug impairment while driving, they have gone to a simple situation where if you're in care and control of the motor vehicle, plus you have possession of an illegal drug, whether it's marijuana, heroin, cocaine, or methamphetamine, that is the offence itself. There is no need to talk about impairment, because you're in care and control of a motor vehicle and you're in possession of an illegal drug.

Now that kind of case is obviously much easier to prove than impaired driving. Has your department or the association you're representing here today, other than the RCMP, taken a look at this alternative at all?

Mr. Evan Graham (National Coordinator, Drug Evaluation and Classification Program, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): The drug evaluation and classification program originated in the U. S. It's currently in 44 states and the District of Columbia. With each state having their own impaired driving legislation, this program is being more and more widely accepted and is continuing to grow.

The mere fact that somebody has possession and is in care and control of a vehicle doesn't mean they're impaired—

Mr. Vic Toews: No, that's right.

Mr. Evan Graham:—any more than somebody ingesting doesn't mean they're impaired.

So we believe this protocol to detect drug impairment is right now the best there is anywhere. It's certainly not the final answer, but for the time being it is...

Mr. Vic Toews: But the Americans have gone to the approach that it's simply possession of the drug—an illegal drug. Remember, this is not aspirin; it's an illegal drug. Let's say you're caught with heroin in the car. The offence is made out. That is the offence. You're in care and control of a motor vehicle with the drug. It's irrelevant whether you're impaired or not; the offence is made out. It makes it very easy for the police officer to say, "Yes, I did a proper search; I searched him and found heroin, and he was in care and control." That's the end of the issue.

You're saying you haven't looked at that.

Mr. Evan Graham: That's correct.

The other problem with that scenario is that it doesn't deal with non-therapeutic doses of prescription drugs or over-the-counter medications that have impairing substances in them. So you're going to a very narrow portion of the drugs that are out there.

Mr. Vic Toews: But what I'm saying is that in addition to what is there already, wouldn't that be very helpful to a police officer?

A/Commr. Raf Souccar: It would certainly make it easier, because you wouldn't have to go through all the steps. But I think what this piece of legislation is intending to do, especially when you talk with respect to charter challenges, etc., is look at drug-impaired driving.

Certainly you could say if you're in care and control of a vehicle—although it's parked—and you have drugs in your possession, it's almost as though it's possession with the intent of driving; therefore, you're making the offence.

But to answer your question—the long way around answering it—no, we have not.

• (1120)

Mr. Vic Toews: You have not looked at it. In many ways it would be not simply saying you're intending to drive, but it would serve as quite a deterrent to anyone carrying drugs to getting in the car, knowing they would be subject to the same mandatory loss of licence as if they were impaired. So it keeps people not only away from driving a motor vehicle if they are impaired, but also from transporting drugs in a motor vehicle. So it could serve a dual purpose.

I just raise that issue. I didn't want to put you on the spot. I appreciate you haven't looked at that issue.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

I just have a couple of questions. Is there a recognized threshold level of various drug concentrations that constitute impairment?

A/Commr. Raf Souccar: No. Unlike alcohol, where there is scientific determination as to the level, the 0.08%, with drugs we're looking at impairment through physical evidence initially, as in driving evidence, the standardized field sobriety testing, and then

through the drug recognition experts. So we're look for physical signs of impairment in driving, as well as the drug recognition expert, which is a 12-step process. That supports the impairment, as opposed to a breathalyzer, because we don't have such a mechanism.

The other thing the drug recognition expertise will do is eliminate any impairment due to fatigue or otherwise. So we're looking for specific drugs that impair.

The Chair: So an individual who used cannabis two to seven days before but passed your field sobriety tests would not be subject to an impaired driving charge.

A/Commr. Raf Souccar: Correct. The other thing to note with cannabis is that although it stays in the body over several days, the active ingredient, tetrahydrocannabinol, is divided into active THC and inactive THC. The active THC is the one we're looking for, and I believe it only stays in the body for six hours. So that's the one that's looked for in the analysis.

The Chair: Good. Thank you.

Monsieur Lemay.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay: I'd like to keep going along the same lines as the chair. I am continuing my study of the bill. What guarantee do you have that you will be able to preserve the samples collected? We know that it's easy for marijuana. However, cocaine can only be kept for a few hours, three, four or five hours, or one day at most. What are you going to do? Are you going to equip all of your police stations so that they are able to preserve the drug until it is analyzed? You have to get it analyzed. That doesn't happen at the police station. So I would like to know whether you are ready to deal with all of that if the bill is adopted.

[English]

A/Commr. Raf Souccar: My understanding—and I'm going to let Evan elaborate on this—is that the sample itself, once obtained by a medical practitioner if it's a blood sample, is held in a refrigerated container and taken to the lab. The lab conducts its tests as soon as practicable. At that point the analysis itself becomes the report that's used for court.

So the evidence that is obtained has to be refrigerated so it maintains its veracity for the lab.

Mr. Evan Graham: In the cases I've been involved in, once the sample is drawn—either blood, urine, or oral fluid—it does not continue to break down at a rapid rate. It breaks down in the body as it's metabolized, but the sample itself will show either the active drug or its metabolite at a much later date when it's analyzed in the forensic laboratory.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay: I'd just like to say, Mr. Chairman, that this bill is going to give defence lawyers a lot of work. I'll be happy, in years to come, when I retire from my job as a member of Parliament. Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, gentlemen, for being with us again. We very much appreciate your assistance in helping us come to grips with this legislation.

At this time I'll suspend for a few minutes while our panellists depart and our new panellists come forward.

Thank you.

• (1125)

(Pause)

• (1125)

The Chair: I call the meeting back to order, please.

We have a presentation. From the RCMP detachments in Manitoba, we'll start with Darrell Madill, assistant commissioner and commanding officer of "D" Division, and Michael Woods, chief superintendent, director general, national contract policing branch, community contract and aboriginal police services.

Is one of you going to make a presentation or will you split it between the two of you? We have roughly 10 minutes for your presentation, and then it will be followed by questions and answers after the presentations of our municipal officials.

• (1130)

Assistant Commissioner Darrell Madill (Commanding Officer, "D" Division, RCMP Detachments in Manitoba): Yes, I'll be making a presentation, Mr. Chair.

Good morning, Mr. Chair and committee members. It's my pleasure to meet with you today to discuss the redeployment of RCMP resources under the Manitoba provincial police services agreement. I would like to point out that the initiatives discussed here today relate only to the policing contract with the Province of Manitoba and do not involve any federal or municipal contract RCMP resources.

The provincial police services agreement is a contract between the Government of Canada and the Province of Manitoba. Under the contract, the Province of Manitoba is billed a portion of operating the police service. In consultation with the RCMP, the Province of Manitoba is responsible for determining the provincial police service priorities; establishing resource levels, both human and financial; and the direction over the placement of RCMP employees working as the Manitoba Provincial Police.

The commissioner and, more specifically, I, as the commanding officer of "D" Division and the commissioner's delegate in Manitoba, are responsible for facilitating the operational management and deployment of those resources in consultation with the contract funding partner as per the provincial police services agreement.

I would like to emphasize that "D" Division RCMP members, along with our contracting partner, the Province of Manitoba, are committed to providing safe and secure communities for all the citizens of Manitoba.

Policing today is not the same as it was 50 years ago, 10 years ago, or even one year ago. In Manitoba, escalating incidents of violent crime combined with increasing levels of property crime represent a serious challenge for "D" Division and the Province of Manitoba. This is true in both our urban areas and rural communities. For example, last year an RCMP police officer in Manitoba handled an average of 117 Criminal Code cases. That was nearly triple the Canadian average of 42. In fact, an RCMP police

officer working in several northern and remote areas of Manitoba handled over 200 Criminal Code cases on average. Addressing that disparity with a common sense approach to resource deployment is our collective responsibility.

For over 132 years, the RCMP has provided policing service to the people of Manitoba. Our greatest strength has been our ability to adapt. That's our tradition. Together, we intend to uphold it. We owe it to the citizens of our great province.

In early 2004, we initiated the "D" Direction project to review and assess all Manitoba provincial police service agreement positions, including regular and civilian members as well as public service employee support staff.

With "D" Direction, the Province of Manitoba and the "D" Division RCMP have entered a new era of partnership in planning the delivery of police services for the future of Manitoba. This has been achieved by developing a framework for the optimal deployment of RCMP personnel in support of public safety objectives.

I believe it was the first time an undertaking of this scope and magnitude, as part of the process, involved consultation with such a multitude of external stakeholders. This included our provincial contract partner, Manitoba Justice; elected municipal officials; the Association of Manitoba Municipalities; the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs; the Manitoba Keewatinook Ininew Okimowin; Southern Chiefs Organization; Manitoba Metis Federation; and the Northern Association of Community Councils. By involving our stakeholders from the outset, we guaranteed a made in Manitoba solution for the citizens of Manitoba.

Community consultation and other stakeholder reviews of "D" Direction led to many recommendations—foremost among them was the need to address critical human resource issues throughout Manitoba.

Manitobans, like all Canadians, expect that policing resources will be placed where pressures are greatest. The RCMP has a long history of deploying our people quickly into the highest risk areas. In keeping with that legacy, our specialized units support front-line detachment policing in order to contribute to safe homes and safe communities.

It was with this goal in mind that recommendations from "D" Direction were endorsed at every level by those involved in the project, including "D" Division, RCMP senior management in Ottawa, and, most importantly, by our stakeholders and our contract funding partners at the Province of Manitoba.

• (1135)

The "D" Direction plan calls for a redeployment of positions within the provincial police service agreement, realignment of some detachment boundaries into an area policing model, as well as a redesigned traffic services program. These strategies share a common goal, improving service delivery for the citizens of Manitoba. Let me say this clearly. No detachments will be closed under this plan.

Here is what "D" Direction is not. It is not a resource-cutting exercise. In fact, the opposite is true. As a direct result of this process, the Province of Manitoba has infused new resources into the RCMP. I'm very pleased to inform you that in March 2005, prior to completion and release of the "D" Direction plan, the Province of Manitoba sought approval to increase the total authorized establishment of the provincial police service agreement by 28 positions. As a result, the total authorized establishment of the provincial police service agreement will increase to 650 positions from 622 as it currently is. This represents unprecedented growth in Manitoba and is a concrete example of the province's commitment to the safety of Manitobans.

"D" Direction was officially launched on July 27 after receiving approval from the Minister of Justice for Manitoba. It addresses front-line policing pressures at nearly all detachments identified as our highest priorities for additional resources. Of the detachments where the number of police officers will increase, seven of them provide services for first nations communities. "D" Direction supports the 2005-06 shared vision statement between Manitoba Justice and "D" Division RCMP in the areas of community policing, organized crime, aboriginal policing, and youth. It very clearly confirms our commitment to safer and healthier communities.

Positions allocated to specialized functions such as the sex offender registry, the high-risk offender unit, and the integrated child exploitation unit will allow the return of positions to front-line policing that were previously borrowed to establish these specialized units. The net effect is very encouraging, as the allocations will mean the continuation of valued specialized functions as well as more resources for front-line detachment-level policing.

A few moments ago I talked about the nature of violent crime and property crime. I referred to the very high Criminal Code caseload my staff are facing. This is where we need to focus. As the commanding officer of "D" Division, I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to underline the critical importance of this issue. I want to emphatically state that the initiatives stemming from the "D" Direction project and the additional resources being deployed into Manitoba directly address this issue. We are doing precisely what we should be doing: identifying the highest risk areas and putting our resources there.

Let's talk for a moment about something that "D" Direction is not. It is not a reduction in our commitment to road safety. Again, the opposite is true.

Our new traffic services model utilizes a problem-solving approach based on collision data. The traffic services program is strategically focused on meeting the challenges of Canada's road safety vision 2010 initiative. Traffic services members will be strategically located to address the highest needs within the province.

Within the restructured program, an interdiction team has been created, including a dedicated police service dog, to assist in locating drugs and other illegal contraband transported on Manitoba highways. In 2004-05 alone, it is estimated that in excess of \$40 million worth of drugs was removed from Manitoba highways, which includes 110 kilograms of cocaine, 2 tonnes of marijuana, and close to \$2 million in cash.

Members have been deployed to individual traffic units in the Winnipeg capital region and the Westman, Eastman, and Parkland areas of the province, as well as a mobile unit to assist wherever data analysis indicates the existence of a traffic concern. Also, additional resources have been dedicated to the collision analyst program.

And here is an important point. Traffic services in Manitoba are not stand-alone. They are integrated with all areas of police service, and in fact all detachment members recognize that traffic enforcement is an important aspect of their jobs. "D" Direction is being implemented in stages, with a target for having the framework of all changes completed by April 1, 2006. We will move employees into this framework in consultation with our career development resourcing services through normal planning and transfer cycles.

• (1140)

"D" Direction is very good news for policing in Manitoba. Together with Manitoba Justice, D Division RCMP is committed to ensuring excellence in police service delivery in Manitoba. We are doing so by making administrative efficiencies designed to improve front-line service delivery.

In a 2005 survey of citizens of Manitoba, we received a 91% satisfaction rating for our emphasis on providing good service to the public. Clearly, this substantial level of support, combined with our strong working relationship with our contract partners at the Province of Manitoba, laid the foundation for our success with "D" Direction. As the commanding officer of D Division RCMP, I am confident that our forward-looking, proactive approach to deploying resources will serve the best interests of all Manitobans.

In closing, I would like to thank you for inviting me to appear before this committee. I feel strongly that "D" Direction represents a Canadian first. It's a made-in-Manitoba solution to the policing challenges we face today and into the future in this great province.

My colleague, Chief Superintendent Woods, and I are prepared to answer your questions. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Assistant Commissioner Madill.

Next we have Mr. Jeff Norman from the Rural Municipality of Taché.

Mr. Jeff Norman (Councillor, Rural Municipality of Taché): I'd like to thank the committee members for the opportunity to present before them today.

By way of introduction, my name is Jeff Norman, and I'm an elected councillor with the Rural Municipality of Taché. I wish to convey the concerns of citizens about the reduction of policing services and its impact on the everyday lives of our residents.

The Rural Municipality of Taché is located in the province of Manitoba and is situated within the capital region, directly east of the city of Winnipeg. The municipality is predominantly rural in nature. Our municipality contains the two largest local urban districts in Manitoba, which are Landmark and Lorette. The population of Taché today is approximately 10,000 residents, with the urban centres of Landmark and Lorette having a total of 3,400 each.

The municipality of Taché receives police services through a provincial agreement with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The detachment that serves the RM of Taché is situated in St. Pierre-Jolys, which has an approximately thirty-minute response time to the urban centres of Landmark and Lorette and a one-hour response time to the furthest eastern borders of the municipality.

The RM of Taché encompasses approximately 560 square kilometres. Given this diverse area, in addition to the fact that the RCMP St. Pierre detachment serves a much larger catchment area, we begin to identify the concerns of residents and the local government of Taché as to effective policing and police presence within our community. Council members of the RM of Taché are acutely aware of how the resources of the RCMP have been stretched in a region of the province that has been experiencing steady growth and is under the economic influence of the capital region.

Council has also taken an active role in finding means to improve public safety, recognizing the limits of the RCMP due to organization and budget realities. The RM of Taché has investigated several initiatives that would elevate public safety within the municipality and bring policing back to its former levels, but these initiatives have not been successfully negotiated with the province or the RCMP.

It should be noted that municipal input into local closures of traffic services and annual operation goals of the St. Pierre detachment does not exist. The RCMP appears to operate with no accountability to local government, and communication would be welcomed by the local government and its citizens.

Statistics from the St. Pierre detachment indicate a focus of resources on Criminal Code investigations, which comprise 41% of all available resources in the RM of Taché, while traffic enforcement consumes 16% of resources allocated to the RM of Taché. This 16% represents only 160 violations, or 3.1 violations per week, for an area having approximately 400 miles of municipal roads, a portion of the Trans-Canada Highway, and parts of two major provincial trunk highways, number 59 and number 12, as well as six provincial roads that network throughout the municipality. It becomes clear to an impartial observer that traffic enforcement is not a priority for the detachment or the executive of the RCMP.

Statistics maintained by the St. Pierre detachment during 2003 and 2004 indicate that activity levels for the RM of Taché represent approximately 35% of all calls for service by the detachment. Despite the level of overall resources, there are certain areas, such as traffic enforcement, provincial statutes, and municipal bylaw enforcement, that receive virtually no focus from the detachment.

Concern regarding the deterioration of service levels was recognized a number of years ago. The municipality, in conjunction with the RCMP, established a satellite office for the RCMP in Lorette. Municipal facilities were provided and office staff was supported by funding through the RM of Taché. This approach was an attempt to bring improved police presence to our community. The municipality continues to fund this initiative to maintain a satellite office within the community.

This was the first of several positive steps local government had taken in an attempt to improve police services locally. We are looking to find solutions ourselves; however, persons outside the community and region make organizational decisions that neutralize the effectiveness of local initiative. This would appear to be the case with the closure and centralization of highway patrol units in Manitoba.

• (1145)

In response to increased criminal activity and declining police presence, communities such as Lorette and Landmark have become engaged at the grassroots level as they have initiated Citizens on Patrol. The COP program is an attempt to protect property and improve public safety as increased occurrences of vandalism, arson, break and enter, theft, and assault are becoming the norm in our community.

Local government saw these realities perpetuated by the service model provided by the province and the RCMP. Consequently, local government sought supplementary law enforcement that could assist in addressing these trends and improve our public safety. In 2004 the local urban districts of Lorette and Landmark collaborated to deliver an enhanced level of service through engaging a private police firm to provide a visible presence in the community. The purpose was to enforce elements of the Highway Traffic Act and other provincial statutes. The results of this were immediate and evident as driver behaviours were modified and incidents of property crime and public nuisance were dramatically reduced. It became clear that regular presence and active intervention had substantial impact on criminal behaviour and activities, both in frequency and intensity.

Statistics maintained by the firm hired to enforce municipal bylaws and conduct traffic enforcement clearly indicated that this type of service was needed. During the three-and-a-half-month period the private service was active, statistics recorded showed 437 warnings issued relative to traffic infractions and 254 summonses issued.

Regrettably, this alternative enforcement did not satisfy a provincial review, and local government returned to the RCMP provincial service model. For a one-month period after the official private service ceased, the firm was retained by council as a visible presence only, to monitor and document traffic violations. During this one month when the public was aware that the private service was no longer active, they observed and documented 376 traffic violations.

During the period the private firm was engaged, the municipality projected a positive effect for the St. Pierre detachment as well. Based on statistics provided by St. Pierre for 2003 and 2004, the projected effect was a 41% reduction in traffic services from the St. Pierre detachment and a 32% reduction in Criminal Code investigations in Lorette and Landmark. With the closure and centralization of highway patrol units, this model would have provided the St. Pierre detachment with more resources in the absence of highway patrol units. The above alternative model has been under review for over a year despite commitment at the provincial level to expedite a workable solution for all parties through a memorandum of understanding.

Since the return of unassisted RCMP policing, the frequency of illegal activities has returned to its prior levels. Examples of dangerous driving can be experienced on a daily basis. Vandalism and arson are again on the increase. With the increase to previous norms, the RCMP has announced a further restructuring of highway patrol units, which can only suggest further deterioration of an already unacceptable reality.

The restructuring and closure of the highway patrol unit can only call into question the motives of decision-makers. Are they are so disconnected with the reality of what is transpiring in rural western Canada, or have they deliberately made the determination that reduction in public safety is an acceptable consequence of the way they choose to manage their responsibilities?

Local authorities live the reality of how their communities function on a daily basis. They are prepared to invest their limited taxation resources in new ways to improve public safety, yet it appears that the two other levels of government are prepared to overlook the trends that result when service delivery falters and will continue to erode a once understood principle of public safety being ever present in our communities.

As local government, we will continue to focus on solutions. One such may be the establishment of a municipal police force that is prepared to be present and to react to the issues of the community. This would mean the elimination of contract services with the RCMP. The establishment of a municipal police service by our municipality and by others that are not satisfied with the status quo would have effects not only on our municipality but on the provincial government, the RCMP, and the federal government.

• (1150)

This, of course, is not the course of action we choose. The RM of Taché would like to engage all levels of government in communication and cooperation in an attempt to find a working solution, a solution that would provide quality of life and a sense of security.

I would like to thank the committee once again for the opportunity of presenting.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Norman.

We have Barrie Stevenson, Mayor of the Town of Morris.

Mr. Barrie Stevenson (Mayor, Town of Morris): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and the committee, for allowing me this opportunity.

When I was considering that I was leaving Manitoba to come here and what it was that I might bring to this committee, I began going through data and letters that sit in my files. The pieces did not seem to come together well, so I thought that what I could bring this committee was a set of eyes and ears that have been in the circumstances we are talking about. There may sometimes not be great order to what I have to say to you, but I am going to paint a picture so you can ask me questions afterwards.

Our community of 1,700 persons is situated near the centre of a 100-kilometre stretch of a four-lane highway that connects large commercial centres such as Chicago, Illinois, and Edmonton, Alberta. As a truck route, the south end of these 100 kilometres or 110 kilometres begins with the largest customs port between Windsor, Ontario, and Vancouver, B.C. At the north end is the city

of Winnipeg and the east-west four lanes of the Trans-Canada Highway. These are the only four lanes in Manitoba.

We provide, in our town, the only hospital and the best-equipped volunteer rescue squad, directed by our volunteer fire chief, on this stretch of highway. On this highway travel 1,000 tractor trailer units per day, and on busy days, 1,500. The auto count is higher, but the number wasn't available to me as I departed Manitoba.

The police service was at its best, in the opinion of our residents, in about 1991 or 1992 when 13 officers in RCMP uniforms worked out of the Morris office. Several times since then different command structures have existed, but the important trend from our perspective would be the rising number of complaints about response times or unsatisfactory responses.

Because the previously mentioned 13 officers took responsibility for offences other than traffic, I would like to relate to you two scenarios, not limited to highway only. The first involves a traffic accident on the busy four-lane, when our ambulances and rescue volunteers attended the scene and the scene needed to be cleaned up. After one hour and 15 minutes, the only available traffic analyst arrived. Measures were taken and there were no further maladies to report. The point of telling this committee is that the traffic is not made up of Morris residents. Persons directing traffic around the scene are volunteers, and when more RCMP officers were stationed with us, 15 minutes would have been a normal response time. I really don't want, as mayor, to have difficulty keeping volunteer firemen because they're burdened with this work. As a result of limited police service, there is a risk to other motorists from not clearing the accident scene quickly.

Another incident involved the theft of a dozen portable power plants. It was reported to the RCMP. A day later, when a worker at the factory where the power plants were stolen noticed the eBay picture showing the serial numbers of one of the units and gave that information to the RCMP, he said he was told, "We'd like to do something, but we have no budget to do a buy". I don't know the outcome of the story.

The RCMP activities in our area are, for discussion purposes, complex. I've come to understand that the customs officers at the port of entry use the RCMP as backup. There is an integrated border enforcement team that uses the RCMP only for enforcement between ports of entry—that would be along the line that you can hardly see between farm fields.

Traffic services are funded by the Province of Manitoba. Local investigations are funded by our municipality and the province. Of course, I am out of the order of enforcement loop, but I presume it's only federally funded. So you see only one uniform, but there are three chains of command.

My coming here, I am sure, was sparked by our town's objecting to the removal of our traffic services offices recently. Having said that, I'm sure you've guessed that I've been given a great deal of information in response to my many questions.

Like a child's workbook, where there are all these dots and numbers to connect, I've looked over the picture, and slowly, as the lines join the dots, I've concluded that all the good stories of policing in our community come from times when police numbers were at full strength, and all the bad things happened when there was an absence of sufficient personnel or funds.

• (1155)

I'm recommending to this committee that more consultation with community persons such as me be held before there is any shrinking of staff numbers. I make this recommendation after talking with the commander of "D" Division some time back. More promotion needs to be done to increase officers' training. Apparently "D" Division knows that it will need to replace 100 officers shortly—I think that's from retirements—and that there aren't going to be nearly that many graduates available.

To end on a positive note, our community has always had the pleasure of having officers living with us, contributing to minor hockey, baseball, and figure skating as coaches. For a small community with many retired persons, having several 30- to 40-year-old physically fit persons alters the social dynamic of our community. We have greatly benefited from hosting an RCMP office in Morris. The record shows that there's benefit to more than just us.

Thank you.

The Chair: Next on the roll, the Rural Municipality of Ritchot, Mayor Robert Stefaniuk.

Mr. Robert Stefaniuk (Mayor, Rural Municipality of Ritchot): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and committee members.

I am honoured to appear before you today on behalf of the council and the citizens of the Rural Municipality of Ritchot to address concerns we have about policing in our municipality.

Ritchot is located immediately south of Winnipeg and has a population of 5,000. We have two major highways running through our municipality. They are Highways 75 and 59. Both run south from Winnipeg across the U.S. border and link with major U.S. highway systems.

Policing in rural Manitoba is provided by the RCMP on contract to the provincial government. In the past there has been a reduced number of police officers in the province due to manpower shortages within the RCMP. This has been compounded by the number of police officers the Province of Manitoba is willing to pay for. This has resulted in the rationalization of police services and delivery. The net effect of rationalization is the reduced visibility of a police presence on our highways and in our communities. This leaves our citizens feeling generally vulnerable in the milieu of today's troubled society.

Clearly illustrating this point is the recent closure of the highway patrol located in Morris, Manitoba, and its amalgamation with the highway patrol in Headingley, Manitoba. Morris is located on Highway 75 and is the mid-point between the cities of Winnipeg and Emerson, Manitoba. Located near Emerson on Highway 75 at the Canada-U.S. border is the largest entry port serving Manitoba.

The policing for this very busy highway and the Canada-U.S. border must come all the way from Headingley, Manitoba, located

110 kilometres away, rather than from Morris, which is only 50 kilometres away. From an administrative point of view, this may make sense, but from a practical point of view, it does not. You get the feeling while driving on this highway that you are very much on your own. With the reduced visibility of any policing, the highway is becoming very dangerous. Police officers are often required to drive long distances for emergencies, which might require speeding to get to the location in a timely manner, and that is dangerous.

Of further concern to our residents is the reduced visibility of a police presence in our communities. Rationalizing police detachments was supposed to free up officers so they could do more policing, but it appears that less is being done. There is little deterrent to imprudent or irresponsible drivers, vandals, and other criminals. We now see more community involvement in policing matters, and while this is helpful, it is intrinsically dangerous to have untrained people become more involved in dangerous situations that really require professional police officers.

One of the things I experience, too, is that because of the lack of RCMP officers and the placement of them, when Highway 75 and Highway 59 in our municipality have a lot of car accidents and our fire department, which is volunteer, responds to these accidents, they end up directing traffic and assisting with the accident in general, and these people are not trained or qualified to direct traffic. This may create a liability for our municipality if there is ever an accident on a major four-lane highway and traffic is directed inadvertently into oncoming traffic. I brought this situation up with the Association of Manitoba Municipalities as a resolution. That was several years ago. Of course it has fizzled, but at the time the RCMP was very much in favour of this resolution and said to stick with it. That's just an aside.

It is fully understood that the demands now being placed on police services in this country have increased dramatically over time. Nowadays police officers are spending too much time doing administrative work and appearing in court rather than doing actual police work on the streets. With societal problems such as gangs, the use of drugs, and domestic violence, to name a few, constantly increasing, the demand on our police agencies increases proportionately.

The solutions are not easy, nor are they inexpensive. The senior levels of government in this country must provide the necessary financial resources and the legal framework to ensure that Canada continues to be a country that provides the required societal safety that we are recognized for around the world.

Thank you for your time.

• (1200)

The Chair: Thank you, Mayor Stefaniuk.

Mr. Toews.

Mr. Vic Toews: Thank you very much. I am very pleased to hear from all the witnesses. It's a very difficult situation, and certainly we have some diverging points of view on the panel today.

I appreciate the work the RCMP is doing, but I also recognize the limited resources they have, the shortage of police officers. I note that the provincial government has requested more police officers. I understand that even though those requests were made some time ago, there are still numerous vacancies in the provincial contingent, and the 28 positions have not been filled. In fact, retirements in the next couple of years are going to eat up many more officer positions than the RCMP can fill.

So it's one thing to say it's good to increase the authorized contingent; it's quite another issue to try to fill them. That's what I'm hearing from people inside the division, not directly from you, sir. We haven't had the opportunity to meet before, face to face, but I appreciate your being here.

I can also testify from personal experience. We're not here to hear about my experiences, but my concern is about travelling down major highways in Manitoba and coming across major accident scenes where there is no police presence. Volunteer firefighters, who I recognize, are directing traffic in often environmentally dangerous conditions—fuel spills and the like. In one such incident I asked, “Where is the RCMP?” The accident had occurred some time before and they said there was one officer on duty in the entire area and that officer was then around Plum Coulee.

I was at...Highways 52 and 59, which is probably three-quarters of an hour drive away. The officer had to attend another incident there.

What I'm saying is the situations that I've been personally aware of...and also municipal councillors are telling me that this rationalization isn't working. While I appreciate the emphasis of the RCMP in saying they are not closing detachments, I'm tempted to suggest that this is just playing with semantics. You're moving resources out of an area, and if you have an empty building or empty desks, it doesn't help us to keep those detachments open. The fact that those desks are still there or the office is still there...if the resources aren't there, if they're now 75 kilometres further away than they used to be, we are very concerned.

I know that Councillor Norman is a City of Winnipeg police officer. When I speak to many city police officers, they are saying crime is now floating into the rural areas, into my riding of Provencher, because the perpetrators know that the policing isn't there. Major drug deals, major crime operations, are now centralizing more in my area, and the City of Winnipeg police are actually doing surveillance in my area because the criminals know that the RCMP presence isn't there. As one officer described to me, it's a lot like winning the lottery if you actually get caught. It's the wrong end of the lottery, but the chances of being caught for doing major drug deals and so on are so slight that now the spillover is coming into rural Manitoba.

I'm wondering, sir, as the assistant commissioner, now that you've heard some of the complaints that these municipal officers have made, whether you have any response to that.

• (1205)

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: Thank you, Mr. Toews for your concerns.

I also want to say to the representatives from the Manitoba municipalities who spoke here this morning that I appreciate your comments.

I'll try to answer the questions as best I can.

First of all, Mr. Toews, your comments are correct. From time to time, the Winnipeg city police does work in rural Manitoba, as we work in the city of Winnipeg; we integrate our operations now. The Winnipeg police do not operate in RCMP jurisdictions without our notification and authority, just as we don't work in their area. The whole secret of dealing with organized crime nowadays is integrating, so your comments about Winnipeg crime moving into rural Manitoba don't surprise me. But we have to address priorities.

I don't mean to sound contrary here, but it must be made clear that the traffic positions are not attached, and never were, to any communities. They might have resided there and they might have had an office there, but they always worked in patrolled districts.

In the case of Morris particularly, and the fact that we no longer have members there, the situation was such that after doing the scientific research on all of our most serious accidents, particularly fatal and serious injury accidents, we had to deploy the limited resources we had to those areas where the instances were most prevalent. We did that. It was a very difficult decision to make, but we had to allocate those people based on science, not on what our emotions were. I can say that when “D” Direction was launched in July, one member was residing in Morris—and we in fact changed the plan to maintain him there. Unfortunately, I think he retired just a month ago—Mayor Stevenson might recall that, for sure. At this point in time, I can't replace him.

Mr. Vic Toews: Just on that point, we heard from the councillor from the RM of Taché that as soon as they got the private police, there was this huge increase in highway traffic offences, both provincial and municipal. You're not suggesting, sir, that it was during the time we had this private police force that suddenly there were all kinds of increases in highway traffic offences? Isn't it more likely to assume that this kind of thing is going on all the time and that the RCMP are simply not available to apprehend them?

So when you're talking about a scientific basis to determine the allocation of resources, quite frankly, sir, the scientific basis that you need isn't there, because your guys aren't out there right now doing those tickets. So the stats look like they're low, and you send in the private police force who are actually apprehending people causing danger to the community.

The Chair: We need some time for an answer.

Mr. Vic Toews: I'm just suggesting that maybe the scientific basis on which you're basing it is simply not there because you don't have any police presence there.

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: I think the difference is in being reactive or proactive. What I'm talking about is accidents—serious fatal injury situations. That's what we base the deployment of our resources on.

I totally agree with Mr. Norman and yourself, sir, that if we had unlimited resources we would have increased traffic personnel throughout the province, because you're right, it's one of those things where, if you have somebody doing traffic enforcement on a major highway, you're going to get results. But when you don't have unlimited resources, you have to put them where the circumstances and the traffic concerns and issues—and when I say issues, I'm talking about serious accidents—occur.

The reason I brought the map I brought with me today was to show you the allocations and the patrol areas. I go back to Mr. Stevenson's comments. Our folks for 132 years have made significant contributions to their communities, and I would like to be able to have our personnel in every community, but that's not reality for me today either.

Again, we have to look at statistics as to where the greatest risks facing the motoring public are, and that's where we've allocated those bodies. But their patrol areas, as you can see by the map, are significant. We've provided them enough resources that when they go on the road they can expand beyond just the small area. They can go where the traffic tools.... We have a program called TISMIT, which is a computer program that tells us where the greatest traffic issues are, and they respond to those.

In time, when our resources increase.... We are continually doing this; I want to assure the representatives here from Manitoba that we are continually monitoring our traffic situations, and if there are changes or if we have to modify our approaches, we will do so. That's my commitment to Manitoba.

Through "D" Division direction, the detachment Mr. Norman spoke about is getting an additional resource at St. Pierre. The reason for that is part of the presentation he made: the fact that the members are quite busy. One of the traffic positions that was redeployed, not particularly from Morris but from within the bigger group.... We redeployed 24 positions from traffic to front-line policing in Manitoba. One of them went to St. Pierre. The position is there; I'm not sure whether the body is there yet.

In relation to Emerson and Morris, the situation was exactly as the two gentlemen pointed out: it is a big area, and the resources were busy. We've restructured that detachment so that the area is smaller, but they kept the resources.

• (1210)

The Chair: Mr. Madill, could you wrap up a little bit?

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: That's all I wanted to say. We are trying to address the issues as they come forward.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Lemay.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Lemay: Thank you very much for being here.

You may be thinking that someone from Quebec doesn't understand the situation in Manitoba, but what we're hearing is surprising. I want to reassure the municipal representatives. A few weeks ago, in Quebec, we went through—and we are going to go through—the same situation. We questioned the minister responsible for this file in the House, because RCMP positions were going to be

reassigned and nine detachments were going to be closed. It's astounding that the same kind of reassignment is occurring in Manitoba, because there is no provincial police. In Quebec, there's the Sûreté du Québec; in Ontario, there's the Ontario Provincial Police, but in Manitoba, the only police detachment is in Winnipeg, if I'm not mistaken. All of the rest of the province is served by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. That is my understanding.

[*English*]

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: There are approximately 13 city police services, but the RCMP provides provincial policing.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Lemay: Am I to understand that you will now have 650 officers?

[*English*]

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: That's correct; it's 650 as of April 1.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Lemay: As a result of your restructuring, service in some small municipalities will be poor. We were told that the RCMP's goal in Quebec was to step up the fight against organized crime and terrorism. It may well be that the Bloc Québécois, or the Parti Québécois, will have spies and an army, but that is surely not what is being contemplated. Is the fight against organized crime and terrorism also one of the reasons for the reorganization in Manitoba?

• (1215)

[*English*]

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: Partially, sir. We are deploying 24 traffic positions to communities in Manitoba where the violence and property crime is the highest. Of those 24, and I'd have to look here on my sheets, some are going into special units to deal with child pornography—which in some cases could be organized crime—to deal with high-risk offenders, for auto theft, and those kinds of things. There are no bodies being allocated to federal responsibilities, if that's what you are asking.

I want to just clarify, too, that there are no general duty uniformed officers being taking away. We are moving 24 traffic positions to communities where the Criminal Code caseload is the highest in the province. No detachments are closing. Traffic services patrol areas are increasing, which in the case of Morris in particular means two positions that are no longer filled are part of a bigger group at Headingley. But I suppose if you want to call it semantics, those 24 positions are actually being reallocated.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Lemay: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Comartin, for seven minutes, please, for questions and answers.

Mr. Joe Comartin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all of you for coming.

I'm not sure, Mr. Madill, if you're the best person to answer this, but in terms of the ratio of police officers, the whole forces, both the municipal ones and the federal one for the province of Manitoba, are you in line with the other provinces, or would you be below or above the average across the country?

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: I can tell you where we are in Manitoba, because I have the stats right in front of me. Are you talking about police to population ratios?

Mr. Joe Comartin: Yes.

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: In the RCMP, in the rural jurisdictions, our police to population ratio is one member for 687 people; in Winnipeg, it's 1 to 560; and the national average is 1 to 537. So compared to other provinces, our ratio is not as good. It would be at the lower end.

Mr. Joe Comartin: In terms of your relationship with the provincial government—again, this may not be a fair question, although mayors and members of council may want to answer this also—are there representations being made to the provincial government to increase the number of officers in order to bring the ratio in line with the rest of the country?

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: Yes, there are, but I have to be clear here that our resourcing methodology is more complex than simply police to population ratios. We have 21 criteria that we use, and I can tell you that in many examples, if we used solely police to population ratios, that would give us skewed situations.

Mr. Joe Comartin: But you used the ratio that said Manitoba has one of the higher murder rates, with Winnipeg having the highest murder rate in the country for large cities. Overall, the murder rate in all the western provinces is higher than the national average. Do you use that as one of the criteria?

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: Yes, we do. We use violent crime and Criminal Code caseloads. For example, the Criminal Code caseload in Winnipeg is 65, and you just heard me say earlier that our average is 117. There are a lot of factors that go into our resource deployments, but we have a model with these 21 criteria, as I said.

As to your question on whether there is consultation and discussion with the province, yes, there is, continually. The good news about that is that when I took over in Manitoba a year ago, we were in a critical situation with no resources planned. Over the course of the last 12 months, we got a commitment from the province for 28 new positions.

In addition to that, the province and the federal government have signed first nation policing agreements that have increased our resources for first nations people. That's one piece I didn't talk about here, but those folks out there are part of the provincial police service, although under a different arrangement. That number is growing. The province is already in discussions with us as I speak. In fact, when I left yesterday, I was in meetings with the province to talk about growth in 2007-08.

So things are happening. It's good news. Unfortunately, things don't move fast when you're dealing with expensive issues like policing, and we're not the only game in town, because there's health and education as well.

•(1220)

Mr. Joe Comartin: Mr. Norman, other members, are you part of the lobbying? That's actually a bad word right now, at least in this city, but are you involved in advocating with the provincial government for increased spending to get more officers?

Mr. Jeff Norman: Yes, we are.

Mr. Joe Comartin: And what was the response?

Mr. Jeff Norman: Limited.

I can say on behalf of the RM of Taché that we're very actively involved in negotiations with that. As I indicated earlier in the presentation, that's been going on for a year, trying to get resolution—redeployment of resources from the RCMP to our community, whether that's more members being allocated to St. Pierre or... We've even gone so far as to lobby the government on the need to review where the detachment is in reference to the area it services.

Currently, the local urban districts of Lorette and Landmark are at the farthest northern markers of the St. Pierre detachment boundary. We rarely see—and I watch adamantly because of the complaints I receive, so I can attest to this fact—the police presence we've wished we would see or that we've been told over and repeatedly is going to be there. They just don't seem to be. That's why we went the extra step of placing a satellite office in Lorette, providing a bricks-and-mortar location for members to attend if they're in Lorette, so they have a place to go, since they are at the farthest northern reaches of their detachment. That resource does not seem to be utilized, other than that right now the staff sergeant has time and appears in the office on a weekly basis. But that staff sergeant appearing in that satellite office on a weekly basis doesn't help the overall appearance of police presence, because there's still not the constable or the corporal presence that is driving or interacting with our community there.

So in conjunction with asking for additional resources from the RCMP, we're also realizing, as a local government, that even though we have a limited tax base, we're willing to step up in conjunction with the federal or provincial government. The citizens are saying, "You know what? If it takes additional funds, we'll fund a private police service that will focus on highway traffic enforcement, provincial statutes, which will alleviate the RCMP having to do that function so they can allocate resources to major criminal investigations, ongoing drug investigations." We're willing to do that, but it doesn't seem to go any further than just sitting around a table and discussing it with the RCMP and the province. We're not getting very good movement in regard to those solutions.

Mr. Joe Comartin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Mr. Cullen.

Hon. Roy Cullen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the witnesses.

Assistant Commissioner Madill, I thought your presentation was very good in laying out the facts.

Also, Mr. Norman, Mr. Stevenson, and Mr. Stefaniuk, the people here are elected people as well. We know some of the difficult situations you face.

In my riding in Toronto, which is an urban riding, there have been far, far too many drug-related murders, and sometimes the police are slow to respond. In the case of murder or attempted murder, they are normally pretty good, but we've had situations where there have been some pretty serious crimes and the police haven't been able to get there because they're covering other crimes and investigations.

If resources were limitless, none of us would have those problems. These are some of the challenges we have as elected people and that the RCMP has in terms of allocating resources.

I'd like to come back to Mr. Toews. We know, of course, the game politically; it's "C" Division, "D" Division, the Bloc, and the Conservative Party, looking into matters that, frankly....

This Parliament enacted the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act, which states that the Commissioner of the RCMP is responsible for the control and management of the force and all matters connected therewith.

Mr. Toews, who I believe was the Solicitor General or Attorney General in Manitoba, of all people, should know that and how contract policing in Manitoba works. Maybe that's why he went into federal politics, because the citizens there said, as Attorney General, he didn't really understand how policing works in Manitoba, because he knows full well how contract policing works. I think the assistant commissioner laid it out very well. It's a contract arrangement. The federal government, I believe....

I'll ask Mr. Madill in a moment, but I think the province covers 70% of the cost. Is that the case in Manitoba?

•(1225)

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: That's correct.

Hon. Roy Cullen: And the federal government picks up 30%.

Mr. Madill stated very clearly, and I'll quote him:

In consultation with the RCMP, the Province of Manitoba is responsible for determining the provincial police service priorities; establishing resource levels, both human and financial; and the direction over the placement of RCMP employees working as the Manitoba Provincial Police.

So if the former Attorney General of the Province of Manitoba hasn't figured that out, I'm not surprised he's no longer the Attorney General for Manitoba.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): On a point of order, Mr. Chair, this is not relevant. We have witnesses here who would be willing to answer our questions. I think this kind of partisan bickering is not acceptable.

The Chair: Mr. Breitkreuz, I agree with you.

Can we get back to the subject matter, Mr. Cullen?

Hon. Roy Cullen: Yes, but I'd like to come back to the main principle as well.

Mr. Toews said this himself in the House on May 3: "In a free and democratic state like Canada, it is simply unacceptable that there is not an arm's length distance between the commissioner and the minister." This is where he was attacking the commissioner.

What he's doing today is trying to gerrymander and influence the operation of the RCMP, when he knows full well—

Mr. Vic Toews: On a point of order—

The Chair: Yes, Mr. Toews.

Mr. Vic Toews: I think if he's going to quote, he should quote in context. That kind of partisan politics simply is not appropriate. I don't mind him putting my comments on the record in context, but to do it for this kind of a political purpose is simply unacceptable.

I was pointing out that in this country, to have no arm's length between the police and the minister is unacceptable. It's not a question of attacking the commissioner; it's attacking the structure.

If he would go back and actually read, instead of misrepresenting what I said, I think he would do this committee a great service.

Hon. Roy Cullen: With respect, Mr. Toews, by having parliamentarians try to direct the operational decisions of the RCMP, that's exactly the same kind of problem that you tried to highlight unsuccessfully in the House with respect to the commissioner and his relationship with the minister.

However, let's move on to the specifics of the case.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz: Why don't you ask the witness a question?

Hon. Roy Cullen: Sure, let's do that, and I'll remind you of that from time to time as well.

Mr. Madill, could you clearly lay out or just expand on what you've said about how contract policing works in Manitoba, the role of the RCMP and the provincial government? If the provincial Government of Manitoba wanted to increase resources of RCMP contract policing in Manitoba, presumably the Manitoba government would have to take that position and then bring that to the RCMP.

In fairness, you're going to pick up 30% of the tab, so it's not just an automatic slam dunk, and there has to be some lead time into the process. But surely the main responsibility for determining additional resources and manpower, people power, going into a provincial police, that initiative, has to come from the Manitoba government, does it not? Are you witnessing that? Are you seeing that in terms of them coming to you looking for more resources?

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: It's a fairly complex to and fro over the course of many months. A simple explanation of what happens is provincial officials and my own staff meet regularly, and I do with senior officials in Manitoba, and we talk about pressure points. Once we agree where those pressure points are and how they should be resourced, I put forward a formal proposal. The province either accepts or rejects that proposal. Then they write to the federal minister requesting the 30% share that makes up the 100% cost, because as Mr. Cullen pointed out, sir, it is a 70% cost share that the province provides. If the federal minister agrees, then the money is there, and then the RCMP resources that increase. We do this a year in advance.

On the municipal side, for cities and towns that have municipal contracts with the federal government, the province has no input. If communities want policing and they have more than 5,000 citizens, they have contracts with the federal government themselves, and the same cost split is in place.

So we work with the larger towns in Manitoba the same way. They identify through a letter to the federal government—now they write the letter—saying, “We’re prepared to pay 70% of the policing costs. Will you pay the 30% so that the RCMP can increase?” For those larger centres—which none of these gentlemen represent, unfortunately—that is the other side of contract policing.

Last but not least, the first nations can enter into contracts with the federal government for which the province pays 48% and the federal government pays 52%.

• (1230)

Hon. Roy Cullen: The point I’m trying to make is, I know there’d be some push and pull, but if the province is picking up 70% of the tab, they would be pretty much a driving force in the sense of whether or not it is going to happen in Manitoba.

I’d like to come back to—

The Chair: Mr. Cullen, your time has expired.

Mr. Warawa.

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Chairman, I would like to give my time to Mr. Toews.

The Chair: Mr. Thompson would go first then.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, CPC): No, Mr. Toews.

The Chair: You’re both giving up your time and giving it to Mr. Toews?

Mr. Myron Thompson: I already indicated that, sir.

The Chair: Mr. Toews.

Mr. Vic Toews: Thank you very much.

In your presentation, Assistant Commissioner, we know now that in Manitoba, on your statistics, the average RCMP officer handles an average of 117 Criminal Code offences—triple the Canadian average of 42. You go on to say that in fact in northern or remote areas there are over 200 Criminal Code investigations, on average.

This is a very significant concern I have. I understand very well how a policing contract works. I understand that over the years when I was the Attorney General I made money available each and every year for more officers, and the response from this federal government, sir, was that the officers were not available. There was always money left over to hire officers.

We have—I understand—an authorization from the provincial government for 28 more new officers. We know that authorization was made in March. Those 28 officers have not yet been hired because there are in fact vacancies the federal government cannot fill. Not only are we talking about new positions that can’t be filled, we’re also talking about existing issues.

So it’s not a question of the provincial government not coming up with the money. I understand how that works. The federal government simply hasn’t been able to fill the commitment it needs to fill; that is, bringing officers there. I hear this not just in the province of Manitoba, but I hear it in British Columbia, in Alberta, in Saskatchewan, and I hear it throughout the Maritimes.

Isn’t that the reality, that the RCMP simply are not putting out enough police officers to meet the commitment they have in terms of

retiring officers, in terms of vacancies, in terms of workers’ compensation, in terms of maternity leave, and any number of other reasons?

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: Just as a point of clarification, Mr. Toews, for the 28 the province requested, the arrival date is April 1, 2006, so they would not be staffed at this point.

To your other question, about whether there are enough cadets coming out of the training centre to meet our requirements, no, there aren’t.

Mr. Vic Toews: There aren’t.

So we have the Liberal government telling us that Mr. Toews doesn’t understand how provincial policing works. I understand exactly how it works. In fact, the NDP provincial government could authorize an extra \$10 million for—what is it, \$50,000 or \$60,000 or \$100,000 per officer? Whatever it is, we know it doesn’t matter how much money they authorize; you can’t meet that commitment. We need to look at the whole issue, back to Depot, and say we’re not putting out enough officers.

Isn’t that part of the problem, sir?

• (1235)

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: Because the requests are developed a year in advance of delivery...it’s not like General Motors, where the assembly line just keeps churning out cars and they hope somebody will buy them.

The way the contracts work is if you don’t have a signed agreement between the federal and provincial government and the municipal and federal government or the other contract partners involved, there is no ramp-up in Regina to graduate the cadets. So that’s part of the issue, sir.

The other issue, though, is just as important. The reason I have to have a strong relationship with my partners, whether it be on the municipal side or the provincial side, is that there are other things we can do when the cadets aren’t arriving. For example, we’re expanding the provincial dispatch centres so communities like Morris won’t have to dispatch from their own community; that’ll be centrally located in Winnipeg. We’re hiring civilian members so they can do some of the analytical work in relation to things like child pornography. There’s lots of that going on.

Mr. Vic Toews: And I understand that. You’ve been through that, sir.

The issue, though, is that in Manitoba we’ve got nearly triple the handling of Criminal Code offences. When you look at an officer handling 200 Criminal Code cases...I mean, I’ve been a prosecutor; I know what that means. We’re talking almost a case every day and a half if he’s working 365 days a year. That’s an unbelievable burden in terms of an officer.

I’m hearing from the officers that they’re working overtime, unpaid overtime. I know how dedicated the RCMP officers are and how hard-working they are, but I can’t believe that the RCMP or the minister or whoever it is who makes these determinations can’t see we’re already so short that we shouldn’t just ramp up production, if I can use that term, of these cadets now.

Hon. Roy Cullen: We are.

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: That's occurring now, Mr. Toews.

Mr. Vic Toews: But the point is that we're waiting for a full year for these 28 officers. We haven't filled the vacancies that exist now. In fact, with the new initiative the RCMP announced about getting retired officers back, I understand there have been exactly three officers who have been accepted—three officers.

I can go into the details. I know the details of why that program has been an absolute flop.

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: Well, you're not quite correct there. We have nine. I've approached nine individuals, and the program was just authorized approximately two weeks ago, so I wouldn't—

Mr. Vic Toews: But it was announced about four months ago.

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: That's right, but I still had to get authority from Treasury Board so we could actually implement it. I announced in July that we were going to look at the reserve program to offset some of our pressures, but Treasury Board had to approve it, and I got that approval two weeks ago.

There was the other question about Depot being ramped up. Depot is ramping up. My colleague could maybe speak more specifically about it, but I know from talking to my colleagues there that they are doing everything they can to prepare for next year's commitments.

Mr. Vic Toews: And does this include filling all the vacancies?

The Chair: Mr. Toews, your time is up.

Mr. Wrzesnewskyj

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: No, it doesn't.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): I'll follow up on a comment Mr. Toews just made. Why is it taking a full year to bring these cadets into the force in Manitoba? I would assume that we would want a police force that's professional and well trained and that has gone through all the requirements of training and educating and policing, and that does take a certain amount of time. Is that not correct?

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: Yes, that's part of it, but it has to be remembered too that the province sits down with me and establishes what our numbers are going to be for the future. If I don't get a commitment from the province, which I didn't get last year, I can't go to Depot and ask for more bodies.

Through "D" Direction and other efforts by my predecessors, the minister—he deals with all kinds of complexities, and you gentlemen know that—was able this year to confirm the growth next year by 28, and he's already talking about growth in subsequent years.

So to take a snapshot in time doesn't reflect the kinds of things that are going on, plus the recruiting piece is useful too, and then we go out and hire people.

• (1240)

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: Thank you, sir.

It appears that the province somewhat bottlenecks the process on this.

I'll come back to some of the numbers you quoted: 117 Criminal Code cases compared to an average of 42 across Canada. That almost averages out to a Criminal Code case every two days. That's quite the caseload, compared to one for every six days across Canada. What I'm more curious about is, it seems there's a heavier caseload. What percentage of resolution do we have of those cases compared to the Canadian average?

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: I don't have those statistics with me, but the successful conclusion rate, if that's what you're asking about, runs about 70%. As to how that compares to other provinces and territories, I'm not familiar with that right now.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: So it appears that you do have a pretty successful case resolution percentage.

I'm going to Mr. Norman and some of the issues he raised around private policing. It seemed like you'd found a resolution, a way to resolve some of these challenges your municipality was facing, especially in terms of traffic enforcement. What exactly did the provincial government say to you? They put a stop to it. Why hasn't the provincial government moved to provide the legislative framework? You had a situation and you found a way to resolve it, but once you found a way to resolve it, the province told you, well no, you can't resolve it that way.

Mr. Jeff Norman: There are two legislative acts within the province of Manitoba. Obviously, as a councillor predominantly, I get my guidelines from the Municipal Act. The justice minister's concern was obviously the Provincial Police Act.

When we hired the private police, we did it under the Municipal Act. The justice minister stopped it under the Provincial Police Act, indicating that he had final say and authority on what policing was being deployed within the province of Manitoba. Of course, the contentious argument is the fact that nowhere in either piece of legislation does it say one supersedes the other or one overrides the other, so we're currently in litigation in regard to that.

The other part was the fact that we've offered other solutions, and it's just getting the three parties to sit down and come to a resolution. We did have another resolution where we had an accredited police service that would provide police service, but then we were informed by the province and the RCMP that if Lorette or the town contracted, services from the RCMP would then drop from the entire municipality. We couldn't take that chance, to provide a service to a portion of the community but then lose police services to the rest of the community.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: Mr. Madill, have there been any discussions with your provincial counterparts you meet with? Has Manitoba looked at using the Ontario or Quebec formula to establish their own provincial police as opposed to contracting? Has the province looked at that sort of possibility?

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: I can't speak for what they've researched, but I know from my discussions with the Minister of Justice that he's satisfied with the RCMP as a provincial police service.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: Finally, we had a number, 117, and I'd like to come back to that number. I would assume that this isn't a situation that's just arisen in the last couple of years; this is an existing situation through a series of provincial governments in Manitoba. Although I have to compliment the RCMP in terms of resolution of criminal cases, this unfortunate heavy load you have to bear has been in existence for a long time. It's been building up for a long time, notwithstanding which provincial government, even the government Mr. Toews may have been a part of as the Attorney General. It's been the same case all the way through?

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: Yes, it's historical. It's been building. I can't speak for what it was four or five years ago; I don't have those stats with me. But it's not an overnight thing, no.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Wrzesnewskyj.

There are three people who have not asked questions yet, Mr. Macklin, Ms. Sgro, and Mr. Breitzkreuz. Mr. Breitzkreuz has indicated that he would like to give his time to Mr. Cullen.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Or Mr. Toews, I mean.

• (1245)

Mr. Vic Toews: Thank you very much.

Now, these 28 new positions that were approved—and they were just approved two weeks ago—will increase the provincial complement, then, to 650. How many vacancies exist today in terms of actual vacancies throughout the province? That's in terms of the provincial contingent, not the federal contingent.

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: Yes, just on the provincial side we have approximately 580 people working right now. When I say that, we also have people off on maternity leave, paternity leave, so we have a lot of vacancies. "Vacancies" is a big word for me.

Mr. Vic Toews: All right.

Of the 622, you're saying there are only 580 actually working, but that also includes maternity leave and the like?

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: That's correct.

Mr. Vic Toews: So we're essentially short 42 officers right now. We're going to have then an authorized contingent of 28 more officers. What is the historical vacancy rate of the RCMP over the last four or five years?

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: Nationally?

Mr. Vic Toews: No, in Manitoba, on your provincial contingent.

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: I don't have that information with me, sir.

Mr. Vic Toews: Could you find that for me?

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: Yes.

Mr. Vic Toews: Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

The Chair: Can we get that information from you in writing?

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: Absolutely.

Mr. Vic Toews: In respect of the number of retirements per year, how many retirements do we have on average? Even if you do the average on the entire contingent, what is it, about 1,000 officers?

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: In Manitoba the average retirement rate runs between 35 and 40.

Mr. Vic Toews: That's 35 and 40.

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: Yes, that's everybody.

Mr. Vic Toews: So there's the 28, and if we get 28 new positions we still have to look for another 35 to replace, because of retirements, on average.

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: That's correct.

Mr. Vic Toews: So we have 40-some vacancies. We have to fill 28 and we have another 30 or so retirements. That's basically what you will be looking for from Depot in the next year?

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: But I've been committed to receive 78.

Mr. Vic Toews: You've been committed to receive 78.

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: This current fiscal year, that's correct.

Mr. Vic Toews: Is this a historical high of commitments for Manitoba?

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: From what I know, yes, bearing in mind I got here last year, but from some of the documentation I've seen, yes.

Mr. Vic Toews: Will that 78 then fill the retirees, the new positions, and the individuals on sick leave or otherwise vacant?

• (1250)

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: The problem is the people who are long-term sick, or who have maternity or paternity benefits, those are benefits they accrue and I can't replace them, because those people are being paid, so they can't be replaced. I would break my budget.

To answer your question, the 78 I'm going to receive is not what I requested, but each and every day I make efforts to try to get what I want, and I'll work towards that.

Mr. Vic Toews: Suffice it to say you made requests of greater than the 78 that you are receiving, and it wasn't that the province wasn't willing to pay for more, it was that simply the federal government cannot produce that many, even within the lead time of the year or so it takes to train a cadet.

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: The RCMP is responsible for that. So I assume that once I make my requests and the province has received approval from the federal minister that they're going to fund new positions, then it's an RCMP responsibility to take care of that.

Mr. Vic Toews: All right. To make it clear then, it's the RCMP that can't make the commitment that you were asking them to make?

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: The short answer is yes. I asked for more than 78 people, but I'm getting 78 this year.

Mr. Vic Toews: Yes, you asked for more and the RCMP can't make that commitment other than the 78. They can't make the full commitment.

The Chair: This is your last question, Mr. Toews.

Mr. Vic Toews: What I'm concerned about is we're still not biting into this rather large problem of officers handling 117 to 200 cases on average, depending on what area you're on. I know that in those northern areas, those 200 cases per officer are often very serious and very violent crimes, as the statistics bear out.

How do we start addressing that problem?

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: I think we already have. It's not going to be fixed overnight. We're deploying the 24 traffic positions I talked about. We're deploying those people to the areas of highest need. All of our priority detachments, the most severe caseload issues, are being dealt with, including St. Pierre, which is going to get another body. That's the first part.

The second part is that we're increasing supervision. We've made a request to the province. They've agreed to it. We're building infrastructure. There are all kinds of initiatives going on, Mr. Toews. It's a complex thing.

I can't help but go back to my analogy of General Motors. They keep grinding out cars even if nobody's buying them. The way the federal and the provincial governments work on provincial policing, they just cannot afford to do that. So it's not a short-term fix.

The Chair: Thank you, Assistant Commissioner.

Ms. Sgro has indicated that she'd like to give up her place to Mr. Cullen.

Hon. Roy Cullen: Thank you. We're being very collegial today, at least on separate sides of the House.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I think one thing we need to understand, at least from where I'm sitting—and I was involved at the provincial government level—is that every department of every government, every organization, has a recruitment lag. In Forest in B.C., we used to call it recruitment savings, because you can't always have positions fully filled, statement number one, I suspect. I strongly suspect that applies to the RCMP as well, especially if you're looking at a demographic where you have a lot of retirees, etc.

Secondly, I don't think there's a government department or an organization in the world in which a division would put forward a request for budgetary resources and would get every single budgetary resource they asked for. So let's put this in some context.

By the way, I was at the RCMP Depot this summer, and they are ramping up the cadets coming out. I had the numbers, but off the top of my head, I think it's from 1,200 annually ramping up to about 1,800 annually—something in that order—in the very near future. In fact, they are running into a potential capacity issue. I'm hoping the members opposite will be part of that solution.

Assistant Commissioner, I'd like to come back to the "D" Direction and the process. You consulted broadly with stakeholders. I'm not sure if you met with every single municipality in Manitoba, in your area, but you certainly dealt with many of them. Did you meet with these particular municipalities' mayors and the representatives here today? You certainly met the Association of Manitoba Municipalities. From what you're saying, it sounds as if you have had a very broad level of endorsement, commitment, and support of

this plan. You can't please everybody all the time. But is that fair to say? How did you consult with municipalities, for example?

A/Commr. Darrell Madill: On the municipalities, I'll backtrack a bit. As can be appreciated, when you're in a project this big, you can't go out with your preliminary recommendations, because you end up going back and changing them.

These gentlemen here, no, we did not consult with them initially, to my knowledge. Once the recommendations were in place—and you're right, Mr. Cullen, the advisory committee was significant—we got their endorsement. Then we rolled into the communities directly impacted and started doing the face-to-face consultations with those folks.

With these particular individuals here, I can't say I know. I spoke to Mayor Stevenson. He was spoken to about the traffic issue. Again, it's a little more complex, because those people aren't owned by those communities, if I can put it that way; they're part of a bigger picture.

On the community recommendations affecting what I talked about, the fact that the Morris detachment would actually go back to its historical size, those consultations will directly involve the community citizens. In fact, I have to say that in some places in Manitoba, where the recommendations don't make specific sense to those communities, we re-evaluate and we change the recommendations.

• (1255)

Hon. Roy Cullen: So what you're saying is that there was a broad consensus. You couldn't have everybody agreeing, but you're prepared to be flexible moving forward if there are certain needs that obviously need to be dealt with. I think it's quite a reasonable position to take.

Thank you.

Hon. Paul Harold Macklin (Northumberland—Quinte West, Lib.): In light of the fact that we appear to have set aside a time that ended for this committee meeting at 1 o'clock—I understand there are budgetary matters that need to be dealt with, and maybe some witness lists and things, and I see we have two minutes—is it possible that we can move on to that area? What is the will of the committee?

The Chair: I would excuse the witnesses now. Thank you very much for your appearances.

I'll ask the committee to stay put and we will move on to the travel budget.

Mr. Cullen, I would ask the committee to stay put. Mr. Macklin wants his lunch, and I don't blame him.

Hon. Paul Harold Macklin: Mr. Chair, on a point of order—

The Chair: Yes, Mr. Macklin.

Hon. Paul Harold Macklin: I think if this committee is going to function, when we have an administrative part of the meeting we need to set aside an appropriate amount of time at the beginning of the meeting for that. In fairness, many of us have other obligations—speaking times in the House and so forth—that we have to meet, yet we want to participate fully in the committee process. So if we can look at this each day, if we know there are administrative interests we have to deal with, at least set them out at the beginning of the meeting and advise that the stop time for the witnesses will be earlier.

The Chair: I would also comment that this meeting didn't start on time because not all members were here. I asked the members to continue at their seats and they chose not to do so; therefore, we're still delayed. We can move this along if we have everybody's cooperation, but your points are well taken.

Mr. Cullen, I'll ask you to present the budget.

Hon. Roy Cullen: Thank you.

We can deal with the budget, and at the discretion of the chair and the committee we can deal with Bill C-215 later.

This is the review by the Subcommittee on Public Safety and National Security of the anti-terrorism legislation, Bill C-36. We haven't really travelled anywhere. The Senate committee has gone various places, but we think it's important to go to Washington, our key neighbour that also has a keen interest in security issues. We just want to talk to elected people there, various officials, to get from them their perspectives on what they're doing with the Patriot Act, etc.

In a nutshell, that's it. We'd go down on a Sunday night and come back on a Monday night.

The Chair: Are there any comments? Is there a motion?

Ms. Sgro.

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): I move approval.

The Chair: All those in favour?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Mr. Cullen.

Hon. Roy Cullen: This has to do with the Ottawa-Carleton... It would be useful to approve this now, but there were announcements yesterday that those people held as detainees under security certificates are going to be moved to federal penitentiaries where Corrections Canada has more control over the way they're looked after. This may fall away, but I can't prejudge that, so I think it would be useful if we could approve it. It's such a small amount anyway.

Hon. Judy Sgro: I move approval.

The Chair: All those in favour?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Bill C-16 will be clause-by-clause next Tuesday, October 25. If you have any amendments, please submit them immediately.

Ms. Sgro, do you have a question?

Hon. Judy Sgro: Are we going to deal with the witness list as well?

The Chair: The suggested witness list for Bill C-215—

Hon. Judy Sgro: Can we deal with this on Tuesday? I think it may take some discussion.

The Chair: That'll be fine. Agreed.

Mr. Warawa has a comment. I know Mr. Cullen has spoken to me on this as well. It's regarding the question of Mr. Toews and Ms. McLellan's response on the Corrections and Conditional Release Act review, which was sent to this committee in the spring and referred to the subcommittee on national security.

Mr. Cullen, do you have a comment too?

Hon. Roy Cullen: I'm trying to anticipate Mr. Warawa's question, but I think maybe it's a useful opportunity. The minister, members opposite, and members on this side are anxious to review sentencing and parole.

The minister referred it to this committee. It was a natural to go to the subcommittee. The subcommittee is working very hard, full-time, on the anti-terrorism legislation, so we can't get to it. There's other legislation in the pipeline. Frankly, the minister is now looking at options that would at least start the process, because realistically this committee or the subcommittee is not going to get to this topic. She wants to review it, so there's something in the works in that regard.

If anyone has some magic solutions for how this committee or the subcommittee can look at sentencing and parole, we're all open to suggestions. But the reality is there doesn't seem to be enough time. The workload is just....

• (1300)

The Chair: Mr. Warawa.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Chair, in the interest of time, perhaps we could have this on the next agenda. I think it's important. It was dealt with twice, and twice the minister said it was a priority to deal with sentencing and the parole system, so we need to have time. I think it is a high priority. It's probably the number one issue I hear from Canadians, so we need to make time and find out how to deal with it.

The Chair: We'll deal with it on Tuesday.

And we'll deal with Mr. Breitzkreuz's motion on the Schrier case on October 27, which would be a week from today.

Mr. Garry Breitzkreuz: Okay, at 12 o'clock.

I think it would take about ten or fifteen minutes for me to make my submission, and then maybe a response of that length.

The Chair: Thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.

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Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes

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