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—
Chair

The Honourable Don Boudria

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•(1105)

[*English*]

The Chair (Hon. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.)): Order, please.

[*Translation*]

Before we move to our order of the day, I would like to provide Committee members with some information.

[*English*]

First, Minister Mauril Bélanger has provided to us a letter, which should be in front of you, that refutes some of the points brought to the attention of this committee by Mr. Kingsley.

The letter was provided to me in both official languages; therefore I've asked that it immediately be circulated to MPs for their attention. That's the first item.

The second item is that at the conclusion of hearing our witnesses this morning I would like us to address two issues. The first one is that perhaps we could start working on our report to be tabled in the House of Commons. There is documentation that will be circulated to you momentarily on this.

Finally, there's also the issue of the role of each committee. I understand the House leaders have met. It's more than an understanding: I've been given a copy of what they've agreed to, and I've asked our clerk to put it in report form so that we can adopt it—if that is your wish, of course. Then I would ask the House to concur in it. Then the House leaders' agreement would actually be incorporated in the Standing Orders. But first we must table it in the House, and then maybe the House leaders can chat with each other later, and later today I could move concurrence in the report. Obviously I'm not going to move it until there's unanimous consent to do so. I wouldn't have any means to do it anyway, because the time of the day to do it has already come and gone.

That being said, I would like to now proceed with the order of the day, which is as follows.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to our order of reference dated December 1, 2004, we are examining the question of privilege relating to the free movement of members within the parliamentary precinct during the visit of President George W. Bush.

We have two groups of witnesses this morning: the RCMP, and MGen. Cloutier. I see that both groups are now seated at the table. I thought that with your agreement, we might spend a half-hour with

each group. However, we could also sit for one hour and have both groups appear together. I hope that we can have everyone's cooperation to meet in camera to work on our report. Do you all agree with that approach?

Hon. members: Yes.

[*English*]

The Chair: That being the case, then we will proceed.

Madame Carbonneau, do you have a brief statement you would like to make before members are invited to ask questions?

[*Translation*]

C/Supt Line Carbonneau (Officer Responsible, Protective Operations, NCR, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): No, Mr. Chairman. I thought it would be best that I just give you and your colleagues an opportunity to ask any questions you may have. So, I'm ready to take those questions now.

The Chair: Fine.

Major-General Cloutier, do you have a statement to make before we begin?

MGen G. Cloutier (Sergeant-at-Arms, House of Commons): Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Following up on my first meeting with the Committee, this morning I would like to take the opportunity to address some of the points we discussed at that time. I have received some answers...

The Chair: Mr. Guimond.

Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ): On a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Would it be possible for us to organize those half-hours consecutively? I personally would like to give MGen Cloutier a chance to possibly change his testimony based on Ms. Carbonneau's answers.

The Chair: Either approach is fine with me. We just decided we would do this the other way, but I'm perfectly prepared to change that.

Mr. Michel Guimond: I just realized that if we have questions for Ms. Carbonneau...

The Chair: Then we could do a second round.

Mr. Michel Guimond: Fine.

The Chair: Mr. Cloutier, please proceed with your brief comments and we can summarize a little later.

You have the floor.

MGen G. Cloutier: I believe the two go hand in hand.

I just want to continue with the comments I was making a few moments ago. I had promised to get answers to your questions. So, I would like to immediately come back to the points raised with respect to the presence of security personnel in the offices of the Hon. Members for Drummond and for Rivière-du-Nord, as well as in the washrooms on the sixth floor. We carried out an investigation and discovered that it was a member of House of Commons Security personnel patrolling on the sixth floor that morning. He entered the two rooms without knocking on the door.

Madam, on behalf of Security Services, I want to extend our apologies for the problem we caused you that morning. Based on what I have been told, the young man in question was a little nervous. However, the Director of Security will be meeting with him and following up on this incident.

Secondly, there was the matter of the bus blocking access around 1:50 p.m., thereby preventing our parliamentary Hill bus from travelling from the Confederation Building to the Centre Block. That is absolutely correct. The bus was stopped for four or five minutes, I've been told, to allow Ontario Provincial Police security personnel to disembark. Unfortunately, however, when entering the parliamentary precinct, the bus turned left directly into the first street and simply stopped in front of the service entrance to the Confederation Building, thereby blocking access to the green service buses for several minutes. Parking services corrected all that.

After my meeting with you, I believe you also raised some communications issues. We can come back to that. It's in relation to information about the demonstration. What I can tell you is that the Clerk sent a memo to everyone on November 26. The Clerk's office also sent a copy of that memo to all the whips at 1:48 p.m., so that they would be aware of this. The same memo also appeared on the 991 information line.

I think I'll stop there for now. I'm sure you'll have questions about this. I prefer to wait and take your questions. Thank you.

•(1110)

The Chair: Do Conservative members have any questions? If not, I'm going to recognize Mr. Guimond.

Mr. Michel Guimond: Thank you.

My initial questions are for Ms. Carbonneau. To begin with, I would like to raise an issue that we had already discussed when the RCMP car wash was installed after 9/11, which is your officers' bilingual capacity. I note that you made personal commitments in that regard. Since the time we met, I have heard of no cases involving Mr. Desfossés' team.

Are you in a position to tell us what the situation was at the time this special event occurred, not only at the car wash but around the security perimeter? As was the case after the events of September 11, there must have been RCMP detachments here from Moose Jaw, Regina or Halifax. Is it your opinion that the RCMP behaved in a manner consistent with the commitment you made in my presence? Were all the officers working on Parliament Hill at the time of that visit bilingual?

•(1115)

C/Supt Line Carbonneau: I know that Deputy Commissioner Pierre Lange appeared before the Standing Committee on Official Languages last week to provide testimony in that regard. I had pledged that all officers working on the Hill would be bilingual. In fact, all 32 RCMP members permanently assigned to security duties on Parliament Hill are bilingual.

However, for an event of this magnitude, we have to bring in people from all over. We tried to use people from Ottawa in order to keep costs down. We are obviously given a budget for such events. However, I did deploy some Montreal members to help out here, as well as personnel from Ontario, to fulfill other duties.

My superior, Mr. McCallum, told me the day before that in his opinion, I did not have adequate resources to provide security on Parliament Hill. I told him I would carry out a thorough review of what was planned. That evening, we determined that we might need additional resources.

Of course, we always have intervention troops available to us. However, wherever possible, we try not to use them on the Hill unless it is absolutely necessary. We prefer to take a less heavy handed approach with demonstrators. Some of my officers were available.

However, at the last minute, I had to bring people in from elsewhere. I therefore assigned seven or eight members, mainly from our Musical Ride. And unfortunately, I must admit I did not really check whether they were bilingual, so as to provide better service on the Hill during this event, as I had promised to do. A little later, I assigned additional people, because the demonstrators were moving in considerable numbers towards the Hill. So, I deployed a group of officers assigned to security at the U.S. Embassy. Since that group was from Montreal, I knew there would be no problem with respect to bilingualism on the Hill.

Needless to say, five or six people assigned there were not bilingual. And, on the exterior perimeter, which is not directly located in the parliamentary precinct, all our members were certainly not bilingual.

However, as I've said, permanent staff assigned to the Hill are bilingual. Every time I assign RCMP members to the Hill, they are bilingual.

Mr. Michel Guimond: We're not questioning that.

Let's take the case of a unilingual francophone M.P. who comes to the perimeter and asks to gain access to the Hill. You said in your answer that RCMP officers assigned to the outside perimeter were not bilingual. In my opinion, that is unacceptable. In any case, that is not the issue.

I want to come back to the matter of M.P.s' identification. Did you read my testimony in front of this Committee as well as in the House, when I raised the question of privilege?

Sdt pal Line Carbonneau: Yes, I did.

Mr. Michel Guimond: The Chief of the Ottawa Police told us that no one had informed him that Members of Parliament had any special ID. As M.P.s, we come through the car wash every morning, and they recognize us. We told him that we had a pin and a green ID card, but he had never been informed of the fact that M.P.s had any other kind of pass through which to be identified. Our M.P.s were asked if they had security passes.

The information was never passed on. Did it not occur to you to mention that in addition to the big bad protesters, parliamentarians would be coming to the Hill to work? For example, Mr. Réal Ménard tried to enter the parliamentary precinct from ten different spots along the perimeter.

C/Supt Line Carbonneau: I know that at my first meeting with all stakeholders, which was attended by about 80 people, including Mr. Pelletier, we did discuss accreditation. I clearly recall that Mr. Pelletier asked whether parliamentarians required any special accreditation. He was told they did not.

• (1120)

Mr. Michel Guimond: Told by whom?

Sdt pal Line Carbonneau: By the RCMP In answer to a question about accreditation, he was told that it would not be necessary and that the usual card would suffice. All our partners were in attendance at that meeting.

Mr. Michel Guimond: Then why were parliamentarians unable to get through?

C/Supt Line Carbonneau: We may not have shown the officers what the ID looks like. However, at that meeting, it was openly discussed and clearly mentioned that the parliamentary ID card was sufficient to access the Hill.

Mr. Michel Guimond: Then why was access blocked to two people who showed their card?

C/Supt Line Carbonneau: It depends on what area you are referring to, Mr. Guimond. If this occurred at the Westin, well, it's possible that the officer working there had not been properly informed. That is one of the shortcomings we've identified and we will probably place much greater emphasis on it in future. We are currently conducting a post-mortem of the visit. I've asked the people in charge of all units to submit their recommendations to me with regard to improvements that can be made. I will also be asking Mr. Pelletier to provide his recommendations. That has already been noted and we hope to better inform all our policy partners next time of the privileges associated with these cards. That will definitely be done in a much clearer fashion in future. However, at the meeting I referred to, it was clearly stated that parliamentarians needed no additional accreditation, and that their usual ID card was enough.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Our next questioner is from the government side. Mr. Carr, you have the floor.

[English]

Mr. Gary Carr (Halton, Lib.): Thank you very much for coming here.

First of all, I'd like to say it's a very difficult task you have, balancing the rights of members while protecting people—visitors or guests—who are coming in from around the world. I'd like to say at

the beginning that I think you do it very well and are to be commended.

Having said that, I think it's very important that both the senior people in the RCMP and, through communications on down, the people on the front lines understand how important it is for members to have access.

As some of you know, I was the Speaker in the Ontario legislature and was involved in security. We had similar situations happen during the famous riot there. The same concerns were raised by members, that when they got there.... The problem was that people who have been involved in security internally know it is paramount to a parliament for members to have access.

If we'd had a vote, for example, and somebody had missed a vote—and in this minority situation, as you know, you lose by one or two votes—it would be a very serious matter that something was blocked because somebody couldn't get in. As it was, it was bad enough that people came in, and I'm going to talk a little bit about the situation in a moment.

It's very important not only that the senior members know, but that they communicate it down to the front lines. My question to you is, did the senior staff know how important it is to have access for members? That's my first question. The second is, was that communicated down to the front lines, to the people doing the actual work, saying if a member comes, he or she must have access to Parliament?

C/Supt Line Carbonneau: What was communicated, as I said before, was that it was very important—and it was mentioned during the main meetings—that we recognize the specific cards for parliamentarians. We always believed each of our different member groups would communicate that information to their people. Usually what happens is they would meet with the team an hour or two prior to the beginning of the visit. We probably didn't insist enough on that part, that they should.... Next time, we will put everything on paper, to make sure they provide the right information to the members on the front line.

Mr. Gary Carr: The bottom line is, you're not confident it really did get out there to the front line. That is what you're saying.

• (1125)

C/Supt Line Carbonneau: Yes.

Mr. Gary Carr: I appreciate your honesty in saying that. I think it is very important to do it.

I want to come back to the other situation, though. Even more concerning is the problem with Madame Picard and finding out that it actually was our staff, who should know better.

These are people who know and understand, or should know and understand, parliaments. I can understand where occasionally—there's no excuse for the RCMP—the message might not be conveyed if somebody has come in from another detachment and doesn't understand about Parliament. It's the senior staff's responsibility. I take it that next time it will happen better.

What is troubling, though, is the fact that in the incident with Madame Picard it was our staff, who should know better and should know that this is the members' House. We are sent here, and they're here to first and foremost serve the members. I understand again, and I say this to your staff as well, it's a very tough job and they do an excellent job. The men and women are among the finest who work here. My concern is that they shouldn't have had this incident to tell them this; they should know it on an ongoing basis through training.

My question, then, is how could it happen that some people within our own staff do not realize how important the access and privilege of members is, when they're people who should be here on a daily basis? The first thing in their training should be to understand that, regardless, members of Parliament and their access comprise probably the single most important thing the staff do. That's my question as a follow-up.

MGen G. Cloutier: Yes, Mr. Chairman, a national question. In fact, what disturbed me upon finding this was that the security force had been briefed the day before on how to provide security on all floors in view of the high level of security that was required that day.

The force is certainly aware of the members' privilege. I'm still at a loss to explain the conduct of this particular individual.

That morning, I suppose, he probably saw a fair amount of security measures being undertaken, i.e. the dogs and all this, going through floors and other places. I have not received the result of the interview, but I was still wondering whether or not this security guard became a bit nervous, in view of what was happening around him, and decided to be overzealous, perhaps overdoing it that morning without thinking about the ramifications of his actions.

Perhaps the director has something else he can add.

Mr. Neal Parker (Director, Security Services, Parliamentary Precinct Services): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would just say the same thing as the sergeant-at-arms: it is a surprise to me. The personnel on security services know full well the importance of privilege, the importance of access of members of Parliament to their House. It just goes to show you that we're all human beings; however, the matter is looked at very seriously and we are in the process of taking corrective measures.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

The next person is Mr. Johnston.

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for your testimony.

Madame Charbonneau, you said you thought there were six or seven unilingual members here in the precinct. Out of how many members?

C/Supt Line Carbonneau: Out of 70 that day, sir.

Mr. Dale Johnston: Since you say they're unilingual, does that mean they speak no French, or does that mean there are some in there who are unilingual in French?

C/Supt Line Carbonneau: No, there was not, because all the members from Montreal are usually bilingual. But those—

Mr. Dale Johnston: No, of the seven unilingual members, you say they were all—

C/Supt Line Carbonneau: English.

Mr. Dale Johnston: Okay. I just want to clarify that.

C/Supt Line Carbonneau: To tell you the truth, I didn't know we had seven unilingual members that day. I just wanted to have enough members here on the Hill to secure the Hill.

But I'm sure there were enough. Out of 70, I'm sure that within the proximity of one unilingual English member there was someone who was able to provide the service in French also.

Mr. Dale Johnston: Thank you.

You are the officer in charge of the entire operation. Is that correct?

C/Supt Line Carbonneau: I was.

I'm the officer in charge of protective operations here in the NCR. That also includes all the incoming visits. So I do the planning for all the incoming visits, which is part of my responsibility.

Mr. Dale Johnston: I've been trying to ascertain who was the officer in command here. There has to be somebody at the head of the entire security operation. Would that be yourself?

C/Supt Line Carbonneau: I was, yes.

Mr. Dale Johnston: Okay. That's great.

Do you do exercises in anticipation of these visits? This isn't the first visit and it certainly won't be the last state visit by a visiting head of state. When the House is not sitting, do you do exercises to anticipate...here's how we're going to do this? We anticipate there will be a secret service in the case of a president of the United States, and other visiting heads of state will also bring their own security people with them. Do you anticipate and go through exercises to work out the details that would arise because of all of the different organizations that you have to coordinate?

•(1130)

[Translation]

C/Supt Line Carbonneau: As a general rule, the exercises we carry out at the House of Commons and the Senate are for emergency calls or that sort of thing. There are a great many visitors to the national capital. Almost every week, the security level is fairly high. I'm not talking about the visit of an American president, but we have handled so many visits in the past that given our experience, we do not conduct exercises with all the police forces together. We have police force committees and we meet regularly to talk about different things we can share with a view to improving our integration and strengthening our ability to work in partnership. However, we do not do exercises in anticipation of visits at that level.

[English]

Mr. Dale Johnston: Then I would have to conclude that the exercises are the actual operations, and after each operation you do a post-mortem to say what you could have done better, or what went wrong, or how you could have prevented this, or whatever.

It seems to me that it would be beneficial if you had some exercises from time to time. Of course, I'm aware that there would be different levels of security, and probably this last one would be the highest level available. I think it would be prudent for you to go through those levels of security and do some exercises to anticipate these things.

C/Supt Line Carbonneau: There are certain things that we can look at and do, but when you do not have the big demonstrations and so on, we would not get the right feeling. We can do tabletops to address different issues and to see who is responsible for what and how we can work together, but you will never get the same sense of having to cross specific lines because they're not physically there. This is something we can look at to try to also improve our working relationship together.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Comartin is next.

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): I'm not sure, Mr. Cloutier, if this should go to you or to Mr. Parker.

I think you have to appreciate that the committee has to make a report back to the House on the incidents that took place, and certainly part of the consideration is whether further action should be taken in the way of a response to the contempt that inevitably, I think, we're going to conclude has arisen. One of the considerations will be whether any disciplinary action is being contemplated with regard to the individual or individuals within your purview.

Perhaps you can give us some indication of whether it's being contemplated, without going into the specifics. I'm not asking for that.

Mr. Neal Parker: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Yes, we are looking at corrective action, sir.

The Chair: Any other question, Mr. Comartin?

Mr. Joe Comartin: Superintendent Carbonneau, I'll ask the same question, but from your perspective.

It is fair for me to conclude, from what we've heard, that there was a serious breakdown in communications around how parliamentarians were to be treated. It seems to fall within the purview of the RCMP to ensure that this didn't happen and that proper direction was given to the off-site police forces.

Is there any contemplation of disciplinary action within the force with regard to that breakdown in communication or the lack of proper direction?

•(1135)

[Translation]

C/Supt Line Carbonneau: I can tell you that we have an official complaint system, known as the Commission for Public Complaints against the RCMP. If we receive a complaint that a member of Parliament was not treated properly, we will look at it very seriously. However, I don't believe that any complaint has been filed so far against a particular officer. If it is, we will certainly deal with it. However, an official complaint must be made.

In terms of communications, I will definitely be taking steps to correct the situation. I know that at one meeting, we stated that the cards would be recognized. If someone did not recognize such a card outside the perimeter, well, I undertake to communicate more effectively with our police partners in future, even if that means including a picture of the card in our material so that people are able to recognize it. However, it's clear that in certain situations, it simply will not be possible to apply that instantaneously. If a demonstration is under way at a point where someone tries to go through, or if the road has been completely sealed off because the motorcade is about to come by, then we will have to wait until the motorcade has passed to let people in.

[English]

Mr. Joe Comartin: Superintendent Carbonneau, it's not the actual carrying out of this; it's the preparatory work. It's the lack of communication, which I think flowed right out of the RCMP. That's what I'm talking about. Quite frankly, I think it ends up either at your desk or very close to it. It is not what happened on the street. It is the fact that the communication wasn't there. To simply say, "Well, we'll take care of it in the future" is not acceptable—at least not acceptable to me.

So I'm asking whether you are addressing the point that the communication wasn't proper. Is there going to be any disciplinary action to anybody, a reprimand of any kind with regard to that lack of communication?

C/Supt Line Carbonneau: Based on that, I don't think so. I'm going to address it because I don't have anybody specific now to tell, "No, you didn't provide the right information to the people." But what we need to do in the future is to make sure this is going to be done.

I do not have a complaint against anybody now who didn't do his or her job. I made sure that the card of parliamentarians would be the card accepted for access to the Hill, which for me is very important. I've been here for three and a half years, and every day, or on a regular basis, I talk to Sergeant-Major François Desfossés, every time we have a demo on the Hill, to make sure that parliamentarians have access to their offices and on the Hill. That's a major concern for me.

Even during that day, at about 2 o'clock or 3 o'clock in the afternoon, when I saw on one of my cameras that Metcalfe Street was blocked by one of our cars because of the major demonstrations that were walking on the Hill, I called to the Hill to make sure there was an alternate road to provide access to parliamentarians.

As I said, I'm going to make sure we do emphasize in the future to all the other police forces that they do recognize your cards and your privileges.

The Chair: The next person is Madam Longfield.

Hon. Judi Longfield (Whitby—Oshawa, Lib.): Thank you.

I appreciate both of you being here. Major-General, I also appreciate that you will take care of the incidents that happened within the precinct. I think we have to divide this up, as to whether privileges were breached within the precinct or outside.

I want to address the perimeter and accessing the precinct. I suspect that when there aren't major demonstrations we wouldn't have the same kinds of difficulties we had. I'm wondering if it would be desirable for it to be communicated well in advance that there would be one preferred access to the parliamentary precinct, be it through the car wash or at some other point. Members should know well in advance that they shouldn't expect to be able to access the precinct anywhere along the perimeter and that in cases such as this you would have to access the one. In this particular case, I suppose the west end would have been the most appropriate.

However, if demonstrations were taking place at the west end and trying to get through to Bank Street was difficult, there should be an alternate access, but there would only be one or two ways to sort of breach the perimeter. At that point, you could have your most senior people, those who would recognize members of Parliament.

As a member of Parliament, I guess I worry about simply saying I want to enter right in the middle, and I can appreciate that while they don't want to breach my privileges, opening a little space for me to go through may also cause some security problems.

If members knew and if the people coming from the west end understood well in advance that they should not expect to get access in their regular way, that they'll have to be inconvenienced a little but will be able to go through the far end, would that assist you and other forces in protecting and at the same time allowing free access to parliamentarians?

• (1140)

[Translation]

C/Supt Line Carbonneau: I took part in the planning of the visit as regards the Parliament Hill site itself. The tunnel was to be used for emergencies. However, the alternative route that had been

selected was the inspection point known as the car wash, down at the Bank Street extension.

I don't know whether that information was passed on to members of Parliament. On the Senate side, Mr. Gourgue passed on the information. I'm told the same thing was done on the House of Commons side.

In future, it might be a good idea to work in a more integrated fashion and to make a more official presentation to members of Parliament about what is planned, so that you will know what is going to happen and what alternative routes are available. This would be a chance to explain which routes you can use if something happens at a particular point of entry. The fact is we must ensure that you receive complete information.

As regards roads in the immediate area, hundreds of messages were communicated to the public in this regard. I don't think we have ever had as integrated a communications group providing information to the public about road closures, partial road closures and access. So, there was a tremendous amount of publicity regarding what was planned in that respect.

So, we certainly did our duty in terms of ensuring people were informed of which roads would be available. As regards the parliamentary precinct, in future, along with Mr. Pelletier or Mr. Parker, we could certainly provide a great deal more information. I, personally, am not aware of exactly what information was passed on to you.

[English]

The Chair: Very briefly, because we're running out of time.

Hon. Judi Longfield: I could picture that during the day things change. I'm simply saying that at the very outset you indicate there are two preferred accesses to the Hill. Depending on what happens, you're either going to access through the car wash or, if that is not possible, there is another access at the east end.

I can understand that you couldn't possibly begin to tell us how things were changing or whether the demonstration was moving, but if parliamentary personnel and members knew that if you couldn't get other information and you knew you couldn't get through at the east end, you could run down to the west end and you could get in. You may be inconvenienced, but at least you'd know there is an access point for you.

[Translation]

The Chair: Any reactions? Is that okay?

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Ms. Carbonneau, I can tell you the only instructions I was given for that day were that I should wear my pin so that officers would be able to recognize me. I arrived at my office at 6:45 a.m. And, since I was unaware of any specific procedure to follow that morning, I couldn't tell my colleagues what we were supposed to do or which route we were supposed to take.

You may well have passed on information to the public, but you didn't give much thought to parliamentarians and the people who work here. My staff were given no indication whatsoever, in particular one staff member who normally arrives at 9:00 a.m. Also, we were all wondering how we would ever get home, since there was no way of getting out. It was a grave mistake not to properly inform us, and one that must be corrected in future.

Mr. Parker, I would like to know whether the officer who came up to the sixth floor had been asked to search M.P.s' offices.

[English]

Mr. Neal Parker: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Perhaps I could ask Mr. Pelletier. He can tell you

[Translation]

exactly what the briefing given to officers working on site consisted of.

Mr. Raymond Pelletier: Thank you, Mr. Parker.

Officers did not have the right to search offices. Based on the instructions we had given them, they were simply to go to your offices and ask the occupants if anything unusual had been left there in the past few days.

• (1145)

Ms. Pauline Picard: I am starting my twelfth year here as a member of Parliament. And yet this individual did not seem to know me or my colleague, who was at the back of office. Like me, she told him she was a member of Parliament. I am wondering whether this guard, who was clearly not used to working at the House of Commons, had been recently hired. After we've been around for 11 years, the guards normally are able to recognize us. Their job is to determine whether we are strangers or members of Parliament. It is important that we be carefully identified: my own safety is also at stake here.

How is it that this individual did not recognize me or my colleague? It seems to me that only two offices were searched. The guard went very quickly and left again. Because I followed him, I saw what he did. There is something abnormal about that. Were officers who normally worked elsewhere than on the Hill assigned to the House of Commons that day?

Mr. Raymond Pelletier: No, the officer in question has been working here for four or five years. I agree with you that we have a responsibility to be able to recognize that you are members of Parliament.

In a context such as that, I imagine the fact that the officer was nervous had something to do with this. We will certainly have to consider that in determining what corrective action is needed, to ensure that such incidents do not recur.

Ms. Pauline Picard: My concerns do not only relate to that incident. I find it unpleasant that after 11 years, there are still some officers who do not recognize me. I can certainly understand that nervousness was a factor. However, I think an effort must be made to ensure that all officers, particularly those who have been at the job for three, four or five years, are capable of identifying us. I'm not talking about new staff who have just come on stream.

As I said, our safety is also at stake here. These officers have to be able to ascertain whether we are in danger or not. Anybody could get in here.

Mr. Raymond Pelletier: One of the essential tasks of security staff is to recognize members of Parliament. That is the reason why we have booklets available with your picture in them. In addition, we go through a training session in which we have to identify every single member of Parliament. Similar to checks, we ask officers to name every single M.P. from photographs where their names do not appear.

So, we try to ensure, to the greatest extent possible, that our officers recognize all members of Parliament.

[English]

The Chair: Monsieur Reynolds.

Please remember that with the schedule we've set for ourselves, we have only ten minutes left. Please be brief, colleagues, so that we can continue.

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC): I'll try to be brief, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to ask the superintendent, since you were in charge when you had your first meeting in the House of Commons for this tour, did the discussion come up about members' privileges, that they have pins they wear, that they have a pass—some of them anyway?

C/Supt Line Carbonneau: I wasn't part of the meeting here on the Hill. I was in charge of the operation in general, but I did have Inspector Frank Deleseleuc with Sergeant-Major Desfossés, who is in charge of our detachment here on the Hill.

Mr. John Reynolds: Maybe I could ask Major-General Cloutier, then. Did that discussion ever come up with anybody, that members wear a pin, members have a pass?

MGen G. Cloutier: Mr. Chairman, that discussion took place at the first meeting, I believe, where our people as well as the RCMP planners were in attendance. So they were aware of it.

• (1150)

Mr. John Reynolds: They were aware of it.

Somebody sent me a copy of the pins yesterday, but our pin is not on there. They have everybody else's, but there's not a pin for a member of Parliament.

So I'm wondering, where was the breakdown in communications? If it was discussed, there seems to have been a breakdown somewhere, that somebody didn't tell somebody.

Mr. Raymond Pelletier: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Those pins that you're referring to, sir, are the pins that are associated with outside elements and related to the visit itself. Those are for the purposes of the security personnel working the visit.

Mr. John Reynolds: Surely they should have been given a picture of our pin too, to say that—

Mr. Raymond Pelletier: That's an internal document, sir, and it's meant for our internal personnel only. And we recognize your pin, sir.

Mr. John Reynolds: I know you do, but I'm concerned that somebody got a book that doesn't have our pin in it. You have the Toronto police, you have the RCMP, whatever. If they have access to know what all the....

Did they not know what these pins were either?

Mr. Raymond Pelletier: Sir, that book you're referring to right there is an internal document. It's not distributed to outside agencies. It's for our security purposes only—House of Commons security services personnel.

Mr. John Reynolds: Then what was given to the outside agencies that were here?

Mr. Raymond Pelletier: At the briefing, at the RCMP, those issues were discussed.

Mr. John Reynolds: Would they have been given copies of this?
[Translation]

C/Supt Line Carbonneau: Well, in terms of our responsibility, we develop an operational plan and provide photographs as well as lists of all the eligible and necessary accreditations to access different sites. In addition to the Parliament Hill site, that day there were sites at the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Canadian Museum of Civilization. In situations such as this, we prepare a general package of information dealing with all access cards.

However, in the case of parliamentarians, we decided not to request any particular accreditation; their usual ID card would be enough to access the Hill. That card did not necessarily give them access to the Canadian Museum of Civilization; it was only for the Hill. It was not part of the overall accreditations provided for the visit as a whole.

[English]

Mr. John Reynolds: If it wasn't part of the accreditation, shouldn't it have been? Shouldn't anybody working on your detail know that members of Parliament on this Hill have absolute access to wherever they want to go?

[Translation]

C/Supt Line Carbonneau: Yes, of course, but in any case it's the RCMP, and specifically Sergeant-Major Desfossés' team, that is assigned to the Hill. It would normally be up to him to pass on the appropriate information to his staff assigned to the visit and ensure that they would honour not only site accreditations, but also M.P.s' ID cards.

[English]

Mr. John Reynolds: Well, Mr. Chairman, I understand that they must respect it, but obviously something broke down. Somebody didn't tell somebody, and I hope we can get to the bottom of that.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

We will now move on to Ms. Boivin, followed by Mr. Guimond. Then we will have to bring this to a close.

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, Lib.): I have a question about bilingualism.

When you held your meetings with the other police forces, did you ask them to assign bilingual officers on the ground, wherever

possible? Was that matter raised? We know that the Ottawa Police Service does have bilingual officers.

C/Supt Line Carbonneau: Only RCMP members work on Parliament Hill. The police force with jurisdiction in the municipal area is responsible for the outside perimeter. I have nothing whatsoever to do with bilingualism in the city proper. My responsibility is to ensure that my people on Parliament Hill are bilingual. As regards the other police forces, well, that is their responsibility.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Did the other police forces discuss this as a group? I am also a member of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. Your RCMP colleague told us that there had been discussions to try and ensure that service would be bilingual. I'm trying to reconcile the different versions I'm hearing from all sides.

C/Supt Line Carbonneau: Well, as I said, it was not within my purview to ask Chief Bevan to ensure that his officers were bilingual. In future, I could certainly ask him to try to assign bilingual officers, wherever possible, to areas adjacent to the second perimeter, to make our job easier.

We obviously try to accommodate people as best we can. I received a call at one point telling me that someone was having trouble gaining access to Parliament. I told them to make it happen. We sent someone over and escorted parliamentary buses. I said I would provide an escort or that I would ask the Ottawa Police to escort the parliamentary buses. We try to make people happy to the greatest extent possible. Had I known there was a meeting taking place elsewhere, I could probably have ordered someone to help M.P.s get there via a different route. We really make every possible effort, but we need to be informed of people's needs. We clearly want people to be satisfied.

These are things we can discuss with Chief Bevan so that in future, he tries... He has tremendous resources and obtained the assistance of other police forces, such as the Toronto Police Service and the Ontario Provincial Police. Perhaps we could ask him to try and have greater numbers of bilingual staff, at least at the first security perimeter, in future. Those are things we can discuss with him for the future.

●(1155)

The Chair: Mr. Guimond, the floor is yours. I will then ask one last question before wrapping it up.

Mr. Michel Guimond: Ms. Carbonneau, you mentioned earlier that information regarding the different means of identifying members of Parliament had been passed on. Were you there? Is this a discussion Mr. Desfossés told you about?

C/Supt Line Carbonneau: I stated that at the first general meeting with all the site commanders, Mr. Pelletier was in attendance. As I recall, he is the one that raised the question. We were talking about accreditation. Someone responsible for accreditation was present and Mr. Pelletier asked whether parliamentarians needed special accreditation.

Mr. Michel Guimond: I see. And who was representing the Ottawa Police Service at that meeting?

Sdt pal Line Carbonneau: Mr. Hayes was unable to attend because he was out of town that first day. Mr. Karl Erfle was there and I am quite sure he was in attendance at that first meeting.

Mr. Michel Guimond: Was Police Chief Vince Bevan in attendance?

C/Supt Line Carbonneau: No, he was not there for the planning meeting.

Mr. Michel Guimond: It is clear that the information did not trickle down to the lower ranks. In his testimony last week, Chief Bevan told us that he did not know that members of Parliament have an ID card.

C/Supt Line Carbonneau: Unfortunately, I cannot speak for him. If he told you he was unaware that such a card exists, then I really can't comment.

Mr. Michel Guimond: Are you absolutely sure? Were all stakeholders told?

C/Supt Line Carbonneau: Yes, I am absolutely sure.

Mr. Michel Guimond: As I pointed out in my testimony, one thing that has been noted—and I'm referring here to various Auditor General's reports—is that when the RCMP is involved, the information does not get passed on to the various stakeholders. In a way, you have said your mea culpa. This time, there were shortcomings as far as communications were concerned. It would be nice if we could see some improvements.

You talked about a post-mortem. Would you agree to come and share your post-mortem with our Committee? The fact that you may have followed a nasty terrorist through the streets of downtown Ottawa is not relevant to us; however, the free movement of members and respect for their parliamentary privilege are things of interest to us. Would you agree to provide the chapters or pages of interest to us to the Committee—in other words, information regarding parliamentary privilege, either in public or in camera? You may prefer to do that in camera.

The Chair: Perhaps we can end on that note.

Mr. Michel Guimond: I have another question.

The Chair: Put your question right away so that we can have both of them at the same time.

Mr. Michel Guimond: Sure.

My question is for Mr. Pelletier and Mr. Cloutier. You both said that staff were very nervous. Were some people armed?

Mr. Raymond Pelletier: Officers in uniform were not armed.

Mr. Michel Guimond: Uniformed officers were not armed?

Mr. Raymond Pelletier: No.

Mr. Michel Guimond: In emergency situations, we expect our police officers to be on top of things. In my case, as a member of Parliament, I am nervous and stressed out all year long. It makes no difference. However, I expect something different of people whose job it is to manage an emergency situation. If I take a plane and there is an emergency on board, I expect the pilot and crew members to be less nervous than I am, so that I don't have to go into the cockpit to reassure them. You worry me when you say that our security officers were nervous, to the point where they went into the ladies washroom, and that RCMP officers were also nervous. Do you give

them training sessions and stress management courses or anything like that?

The Chair: Let's get an answer to that, if you don't mind.

Ms. Carbonneau, the first question was addressed to you.

• (1200)

C/Supt Line Carbonneau: Regarding your first point, there are a great many recommendations that will be made with respect to the partnership arrangement, and how we can work together better. Those are things that will be addressed.

I can tell you right now that one of the issues we will look at in the report is communications. We want to ensure that all partners, and even people internally, are properly informed of the points you have raised at this meeting in terms of recognizing parliamentary ID cards. That is one of the recommendations that will be made, and I will be asking Mr. Pelletier to make it official in one way or another. That will certainly be part of the report. However, I don't think there is any need for us to share other aspects of the report with you, if they really have nothing to do with the issues you have raised.

In terms of recognition of ID cards, one of the recommendations will be to ensure that this information is passed down to every operational level in all appropriate police forces. If I tell Chief Bevan that it's important that all his officers be informed of this, someone internally will have to ensure that that is done. So, to answer your question, that will be addressed in the report, but I see no real need for us to share with you all the other recommendations that will be coming forward as a result of this visit, which have nothing to do with the points you have raised.

The Chair: We hear you.

Mr. Pelletier.

Mr. Raymond Pelletier: We are talking about one person in particular who was nervous. Everybody was not nervous, based on the information I received in my investigation.

The Chair: In that regard, I have a question for the Sergeant-at-Arms.

If memory serves me, you stated a little earlier that a memo had been put out to ensure that parliamentarians would be informed and that this information had been put up on the Internet site. Could you table a copy of that memo with the Committee Clerk? The other day, we were wondering whether the whips and even parliamentarians had been told. There was some doubt about that. I believe the answer to that question is yes, because I see someone bringing me the document.

I have a second question. Superintendent Carbonneau, the parliamentary card that the Ottawa Police Chief did not recognize the other day was my own, which I actually showed him. In my own caucus, I am the M.P. with the most seniority. The M.P. who was blocked access to the Hill that day is in fact the dean of Parliament. The police didn't even recognize the member of Parliament with the most seniority in the House of Commons. The member of Parliament who was refused access to the Hill just as a reporter was let in is the dean of Parliament. I refer here to Reverend Bill Blaikie.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Is it the same picture as 40 years ago?

The Chair: I don't know. Was he or was he not recognizable on his ID card? I really don't know. But according to them, the problem was that it wasn't the right card. So, that doesn't apply. I bring this to your attention for the purposes of your own post-mortem.

Mr. Cloutier, did you wish to add anything before I wrap this up and we ask you to leave so that we may continue in camera?

[*English*]

MGen G. Cloutier: Just as a follow-up to Mr. Comartin's question—he brought up the issue of what we should do insofar as disciplinary action is concerned—I'd like to push this one step further. That might help you out in your recommendation.

Having read all the transcripts, I would suggest that perhaps we'll have to go back to having orientation sessions on parliamentary privilege, and not only within our own security force. I think from now on we'll have to include the RCMP and the Ottawa Police, at least those two police forces, which are closely connected to us.

On the parliamentary accreditation, I think the time has come for all police forces to sit down and start working out a way of operating, so that we all share the same type of approach when a major visit at such a high level comes in on two weeks' notice. Normally we get six months; this time we got two weeks.

The third suggestion I have is that somehow either we or the RCMP should be informed of activities such as what took place that day, i.e. the meeting at the Westin Hotel. We just got caught that day, I suppose—or the RCMP did—when the demonstrators moved from Parliament Hill and closed the area. Had the RCMP known that there were members in that building—and as I mentioned to you before, I found out that the former prime minister was sitting at the Chateau Laurier, prisoner of the group of demonstrators outside—we could have taken steps to make sure that the return to Parliament Hill would have gone unimpeded.

Therefore, I would like to see some sort of vehicle by which the police forces could be aware of that.

The last one that we can discuss in-house, among ourselves, is that perhaps when we have such major visits, security services should present a briefing to the whips of all parties so they in turn can advise caucus, if they see fit, and all of us will be in the same boat.

In closing, Mr. Chair, I thank you for inviting me here—twice. I also would like to thank, on behalf of the House, members of the forces who participated in providing security that day. The reports I've received, even from Washington, have been very positive. The mission was tough—two weeks to prepare—and there were no major incidents.

Thank you very much.

• (1205)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Michel Guimond: Mr. Chairman, I have a point of order.

The Chair: All right, but not another debate, Mr. Guimond.

Mr. Michel Guimond: Mr. Chairman, to whom was the document tabled by the Sergeant-at-Arms addressed? Was it addressed to the whips?

The Chair: There is more than one.

Mr. Michel Guimond: I'm talking about the first one.

The Chair: We will provide you with copies.

The first document, which is dated November 26, is addressed to employees. In fact, this is the one I received at my office.

The second is an e-mail that was sent to the whips to make them aware of the first message. It reads as follows: “For your information, please find a message sent to all employees of the House of Commons with respect to President Bush's visit.” There is no mention of members of Parliament. This was the memo sent to employees.

Mr. Michel Guimond: Yes, I read it as the party whip. I do not consider myself to be an employee. By the way, while I recognize that House of Commons employees perform important work, I thought it was addressed to employees. And, being a parliamentarian, I am not an employee of the House of Commons. So, we should not conclude that the whips were informed. I simply want to set the record straight in that regard.

The Chair: Well, I received exactly the same memo at my office and since it was addressed to House of Commons employees, I didn't think it was meant for me.

Having said that, I want to take this opportunity to thank Superintendent Carbonneau and her staff. I also want to thank the Sergeant-at-Arms, MGen. Cloutier, as well as Mr. Parker and Mr. Pelletier for being with us.

We will now ask our guests to leave the room so that we may continue drafting our report in camera.

We will suspend the meeting for two minutes.

[*The meeting continues in camera*]

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