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The Honourable Roger Gallaway

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•(1530)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Roger Gallaway (Sarnia—Lambton, Lib.)): Good afternoon.

As a follow-up to our report on airports, we have with us CATSA officials. We're going to let Mr. Duchesneau begin.

Welcome, Mr. Duchesneau. You've been here before. Perhaps you want to start, and then we'll get to questions. We'll try to make this efficient today.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau (President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Air Transport Security Authority): Thanks, Mr. Chair. I have a short statement, about ten minutes, and then we'll be ready for questions.

[Translation]

Mr. Chairman, I am very pleased to be here today to speak before the committee.

[English]

I look forward to your question period. To make sure we can answer you in real time and give you the right answers, I've brought with me senior staff. Mr. Mike McLaughlin is our CFO. Mr. Jacques Grilli is vice-president, operations. Mr. MacKay is with law and strategy. Mr. McGarr is in charge of risk and quality.

[Translation]

We have done our homework and studied the questions your committee raised during recent meetings this month, particularly at the confirmation of General Maurice Baril's appointment as Chairman of our Board of Directors.

I read your report with great interest, and today I will be happy to answer the questions you raised. I would also like to take this opportunity to clarify the role of the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, particularly regarding some aspects of airport operation that you raised in your report. Your interim report did not touch on a significant portion of our activities, and I would like to take this opportunity to give you a better idea of what we do.

CATSA is a crown corporation, established on April 1, 2002 following the events of September 11. We are accountable to Parliament through the Minister of Transport. CATSA is one of many layers of the air transport security system. We handle some aspects of security in 89 Canadian airports. Behind the scenes, we work very closely with Transport Canada, with organizations that apply the legislation, and with security and information authorities, as well as with airline companies and Canada's airport administra-

tions. Transport Canada establishes air transport security policy and regulations. Essentially, our role consists in providing an effective security screening system.

We have six areas of responsibility, particularly screening passengers and carry-on baggage, as well as searching checked baggage. We are also establishing a national pass system using biometric data. We also conduct randoms screening of airport personnel. We fund and manage RCMP air marshal programs, as well as fund some components of the police services operating in class 1 and 2 airports.

Your committee's interim report deals with the air travellers security charge. There again, that charge is associated with CATSA's activities. Given that CATSA was established with the passage of Bill C-49, and that the air travellers security charge was instituted at the same time, many people believe that the air travellers security charge, which is used for screening, is closely associated with CATSA's work. That is not the case.

The air travellers security charge is not used to fund CATSA directly. All our funding comes from parliamentary appropriations, as does that of all other crown corporations. We are funded by the federal government, and receive no revenue from the air travellers security charge. I think that this point should be made clearly. Mr. Chairman, I would encourage you to indicate in your final report that there is no link between the air travellers security charge and CATSA.

That said, the issue we are really interested in is whether our funding is sufficient to cover our six mandates, and provide sufficient flexibility to guarantee an air transport security system that meets the needs of Canadians.

•(1535)

[English]

A second issue arises from the interim report in its discussion of our relationship with airports. I noted in particular the concern that CATSA may be making unreasonable demands on airports and asking for free services. It was part of the CATSA Act that airports had to give us the space for equipment. Mr. McLaughlin will be giving you details on how much money we are paying to airports. We are paying quite a large amount of money to airports for the space we are using.

We provide Canadian airports with benefits that are fundamental to their business. The CATSA Act requires airports to provide the space and services needed to operate passenger screening. We provide a fully installed system that protects customers from threats that could be hidden in checked baggage, for instance. We provide a secure environment for customers, employees, and suppliers, and we provide selected airports with funds to hire police services.

In addition, CATSA rents space for offices and training centres for approximately \$600,000 a year. Our service providers pay rent for screening officer staging areas, which are, of course, recaptured from CATSA within the fixed portion of fees. Mr. Chairman, in many respects we are paying our own way.

Official languages was an aspect that you touched on in your interim report. I noted that we share some common concerns. One area that stands out for me in particular is on official languages, as I said. As I have mentioned to this committee in the past, we take the requirement for official languages seriously, and we expect to see progress.

To ensure that we do so, we are preparing to designate a managerial position with primary responsibility for official languages and to designate a vice-president as our champion for official languages. In addition, we have written a requirement to provide services in the two official languages of this country into our contracts with screening providers, and we have enhanced our training program in order to raise the capabilities of our staff to the required level. As well, we are operating a pilot program in Toronto and Montreal that links passengers to our security communications centre in Ottawa.

If we fail to provide front line service in one of the official languages, we can certainly provide that service using our communication technology. We may even be able to take this concept further and offer service in all the languages that CATSA speaks today. I'm proud to say that employees of CATSA speak 101 different languages. In the case of an emergency, we could give service in any of these 101 languages.

There were improvements. Your committee touched on some of the issues. We've made a lot of improvements since 9/11. For example, we screen 35 million passengers a year and roughly about 60 million pieces of luggage.

• (1540)

[Translation]

We have also introduced new high-technology detection systems, such as X-Ray technology and explosive detection equipment. And in order to ensure that our screening officers know how to use the equipment properly, we have provided a comprehensive training as well as certification program. We have established clear quality standards and operating procedures, making it possible to use financial resources effectively and reduce wait time for air travellers. Waiting time is an issue frequently raised during our discussions with passengers.

In December 2004, we have further enhanced our multi-layered security concept by implementing non-passenger screening. Air crew members and airport employees are subject to random searches. In addition, last year we established the Security

Communication Centre here in Ottawa, making it possible for us to maintain a permanent relationship with our 89 airports. We are just about to complete the installation of close-circuit camera equipment.

[English]

These are clear improvements over what we had before.

So what is the air security in the future? I would like to talk about this and how our air security system should work in the future. We need to have this strategic discussion because we at CATSA are seeing how the system needs to evolve to maintain and improve protection.

There is every risk that the air security system we operate today will turn into the Maginot Line of the 21st century. For those of you who are not familiar with military history, just after the First World War, the French decided to build what they called the Maginot Line. It was a series of defensive installations designed to make sure the Germans would not invade the country. But when the Second World War started, the Germans just went around it, and it didn't take long for Paris to fall into German hands.

Look at the threat we're facing today. Is it passengers wielding box-cutters? If it is, then we did a remarkable job over the last year. We intercepted 738,000 items prohibited under the regulations, from rifles and bullets to pocket knives and nail scissors.

But is the threat we faced on 9/11 going to remain the threat of the future? Are we trusting our future to a Maginot Line? That is the question. Look at what the terrorists are learning today in places such as Iraq. They are testing themselves every day against a modern fighting force that operates with leading-edge technology and tactics. Sooner or later, this knowledge will be put into practice as hundreds and perhaps thousands of operatives sneak into western Europe or North America. They will not carry box-cutters this time. But whatever they carry, we must be prepared.

We need to adapt to this new threat. The bottom line is that the threat is constantly changing. Our air security system has to adapt faster than the threat. Unfortunately, we are operating with a system of regulations that amounts to a Maginot Line. In this system, Transport Canada determines policy and issues regulations.

Our role is to operate the system according to their regulations, so we need to move beyond our current system. After all, regulations do not change quickly. In a race with terrorists, the rule book will always lose. So we should think about new ways that promote flexibility, that help us to anticipate the unexpected, and that allow us to adapt quickly while maintaining continuous protection.

We need three things: flexibility, innovation, and public acceptance. We are making advances on each of these today, but there is much more that should be done.

Flexibility takes many forms. Let's look at financial flexibility first. We need the ability to adapt to new threats in real time. Financially, we need to meet sudden contingencies. We may need to reallocate our spending quickly. We may need to recast our budget rapidly. We cannot do any of this under the rules we now follow. We could achieve it under a performance-based framework that measured outcomes rather than process. We need to be judged on results.

We also need innovation. We need to concentrate our resources where we are most likely to find the threat. We have talked in the past about a registered-traveller program. This approach would allow us to clear travellers who we know are not a threat and to concentrate on those travellers about whom we need to know more. This program would be the first step toward a risk-based security system.

Other elements could include improved watch lists. We could make judgments based on passenger behaviour. For instance, we could take a close look at travellers with one-way tickets. We would have access to intelligence information online.

• (1545)

In essence, where today we have equipment to screen passengers for the metal in their pockets, tomorrow we will have a security dashboard with a great deal more information than we have now. Instead of a boarding pass that tells me that a passenger is on a certain flight in a certain seat, a CATSA officer would have a full risk assessment of that passenger. We would have a full spectrum of information about that passenger at our fingertips, right there at the screening point. We would then be able to ask the questions and make the checks necessary to let the passenger board the flight.

Our detection technology will eventually need to change as well. As technology grows cheaper and faster, we will deploy it, and we will need to do this quickly to keep pace with the changing threat.

Finally, there is customer service. We need more than flexibility and innovation. We have to have a strong focus on customer service so that people who use the system embrace it rather than resent it. CATSA has to move beyond the perception that we are a hassle, that we are interested mainly in your keys and nail scissors. In the airport of the future, perhaps it will be CATSA that greets you at the curb, checks you and your baggage, and ushers you inside the airport. Not only would we protect aircraft, we would also protect the airport itself, a clear benefit to the airport's passengers, customers, and suppliers. We need to be seen as the people who ensure and even guarantee that your flight will not be interrupted by terrorists.

In closing, CATSA welcomes any input that helps us do our job better. We received valuable advice from the Auditor General as she prepared her last report. We are also looking forward to the five-year review required by the legislation that brought CATSA to life. We are also interested in seeing what comes back from the security audit conducted earlier this month by the International Civil Aviation Organization, ICAO, based in Montreal.

I am serious about this issue of feedback, learning, and continuous improvement. We welcome scrutiny. Close inspection enables us to prevent errors, and we strive to do so. In our work there is no room for error. If we make mistakes, then people can die.

I'll stop here. I think this paves the way for questioning from members of the committee.

Thanks a lot.

The Chair: I'm sure it has, Mr. Duchesneau.

We're going to start with Mr. Gouk.

Mr. Jim Gouk (British Columbia Southern Interior, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm going to forgo any questions on cost to airports. It's been touched on, and I'm sure others have a lot of questions on it. I want to get to some other things.

Frankly, as a former government employee, I was a little alarmed at your comments about how one day CATSA might expand, greet you at the curb, escort you inside. It sounds suspiciously like what we used to call empire building. I'm sure that's not what you meant, but it's a frightening thought, and it's one of the things that we're actively concerned about.

• (1550)

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: It's not.

Mr. Jim Gouk: First, going to trusted traveller, it's great that you mentioned it, but we've mentioned it every time you've been here. We've mentioned it every time officials from your organization come here, and I've yet to hear any concrete plan that is going to get us there. Frankly, I don't know what the delay is. We're talking about high-frequency travellers who have gone through whatever security check is determined to be appropriate and all of the other hurdles that might be placed in their way. We already let cleaners and casual employees of sales organizations through to air side with random checks, which is the same thing a trusted traveller would be looking at. The only excuse I've heard for delay is that the cleaners and sales people aren't getting on board the airplane. Well, they could sure as hell hand something to someone who is getting on the airplane, so I don't buy that argument.

So first of all, what concrete measures, what timetable, are we looking at to get some kind of program going?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: I was expecting that question, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Jim Gouk: Then you should have a great answer.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Yes, I think you're going to love it.

We're meeting with our board next week. We only have six mandates. If we were to expand to a seventh mandate, we would be building an empire, and we would have to have our board's authorization. That's the first step.

The second step is money. We need to convince Treasury Board to allow us to operate on a cost-recovery basis, which we are not allowed to do right now. There are costs associated with trusted traveller, and we don't have this authority.

The nicest part of the answer is that we've entered into an agreement with two major airports to start a pilot project as soon as we get approval from the board of directors. Montreal and Edmonton are ready to enter into this project. We also need Transport Canada to adapt its regulations to this new way of doing screening.

Mr. Jim Gouk: With regard to costs, I assume there will be an application cost, the same as there is for NEXUS and cards of that nature. If this cuts down the lineup, the backlog for security, and the number of check-ins you need open, then I hope there will be some offsets there. It's unfortunate that after all the inquiries I've made it's in none of the airports I go through, but such is life.

On airports, I don't know how well you know the layout of the Calgary airport. I was through there a couple of weeks back. I had occasion to go into the main terminal, which required going back through security. I was in A section. Of course, it interconnects with B. There was absolutely nothing open in B. The lineup in A was all the way back, almost to the check-in line in B. They suggested it would be an hour and a half to two hours to get through, because there were only three lines, I believe, in A that could physically be there.

This is one of the complaints we've heard from airports in the past. CATSA doesn't seem to have any negotiation or discussions with airport authorities on airline demands or passenger flows. I don't know why it was down to such a small number of people that day, but the lineups were absolutely horrendous.

How is this still happening, and what is CATSA doing to address this problem? We've had it here in Ottawa. I happened to run into it in Calgary. What are we doing about it?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: There's a flip side to how airports see this problem. First, we had certain incidents in other airports where lines were left open because there were some stores behind the screening line. These stores needed to be open, so we had to spread out the personnel we had. That's one aspect.

The second aspect is that in many airports we don't receive information on the airline's load because they don't want to share that with us. In Montreal, for instance, we had a problem. Now CATSA representatives sit on the airport operator's committee to make sure we get information ahead of time on the loads we can expect at screening lines. Otherwise we are operating with a crystal ball, and trying to find out how many passengers will show up at a screening line at a very specific time.

Mr. Jim Gouk: Well, whatever the process, it sure wasn't working in Calgary that day.

Here in Ottawa, our nation's capital, the headquarters of CATSA, you have what I would suggest is probably the worst check-in area for CATSA of any airport I fly through. You have tables that are not in any way connected to the actual checking station. People are expected to take their laptops out on those tables and place them in trays, along with other such things they might have. They have to carry those things, their carry-on baggage, their briefcases, and whatever else they have. It's quite a juggling act for able-bodied men, never mind someone older, very young, or other people who might have difficulty with that.

Why do we have such an incredibly awkward set-up at Ottawa airport?

• (1555)

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: I'm so glad you asked that question. If airports would talk with CATSA representatives before deciding on the layout of the screening point, maybe we would do things differently. We're doing that right now with Winnipeg. They're planning to build a new airport, and we will be there from the outset to make sure we have the right amount of space to do our business properly.

You're so right. In order to improve the throughput at screening points, we need to make sure that when a passenger presents a problem he's taken out of the line. Then we can screen him in a different location and get the throughput to the highest level with other passengers. Right now in Ottawa we are not in a position to do that, because once you pass the screening point you're already in the corridor leading to different gates. So we don't have enough space to do that. We would have to redo the screening point, and there are costs associated with that.

It's a work in progress. We are working with airport authorities to improve the quality of service we are given.

Mr. Jim Gouk: It will be interesting to discuss your response with both those airport authorities to see how they react to the concern that they're indeed part of the problem instead of just the victim.

You mentioned the Maginot Line. That's an interesting concept. Relative to your comment on the Maginot Line, at one of your previous visits I recall offering, but I don't actually recall your answering, that by way of demonstrating the fallacy of the system at this point, I would take any number of explosive and non-explosive items—delisted, de-whatever, made safe—through security, and once through, I would turn them in, as long as I had a letter saying I wasn't going to go to jail for demonstrating this to you. I still stand by that.

I've looked at airports—in fact, it becomes a passing time activity as I go through various airports—to see where the real holes in the system are. I'll tell you straight that at some of them, for example at the Calgary airport, aside from firearms and whatever else, I could easily take a bazooka or a rocket launcher through without using any identification as a MP or a former airline industry worker—very easily. It can be done at other airports as well. Calgary happens to be the easiest example I've encountered.

First of all, how do we deal with the fact that it is there? It is risk management, I realize. You said you don't want to be hassling the people with the nail clippers, but that's exactly what we're doing with the system we have, while these kinds of holes still exist in the system.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Mr. Chair, if you want me to tell you we're going to put a system in place that is 100% foolproof, we're going to bring this industry to a halt. Yes, we can take much more time to screen everyone to make sure nothing will come through. That's our job to do that, but at what cost? I'm hearing contradictory messages here. You want people to go through quickly, and at the same time you want to make sure nothing will come through. Well, I think we can take either step.

I think what we have right now is probably.... I'm not bragging about it, but we did some benchmarking with other countries, and I'm really anxious to see the ICAO audit report that should be out sometime next month.

Mr. Jim Gouk: The items I made reference to certainly wouldn't go through a checkpoint. What does CATSA do with regard to securing the non-passage parts of the airport, where these kinds of problems could exist?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: I think we're also a victim of the name we have. We are the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority. People have a tendency to think we are responsible for the security of the whole airport. That's not the case. We have six very specific mandates. Other parts of security are done through police services or security services with airport authority employees. We all need to work together. We're striving to enhance the system, and I think we're succeeding.

We had questions about infiltration tests. Some people claim that infiltration tests need to be 100% accurate. I'm telling you it's impossible. When a teacher handles an exam for students, if the mark of every student is 100%, there are many conclusions you can draw from that. Either someone had the questions before, or the questions were too easy, or someone decided that everyone would have 100%. It's impossible. So that's why we have a multi-layered system. If one system fails, the second one should do it.

Once again, I'm really anxious to see the ICAO report. The hold-back screening system we have put in place in Canada is second to none, because we have this five-layer system. Other countries are trying to copy what we are doing, so we must be doing something right. I would emphasize the fact that after 1985, after the incident of Air India, Canada took steps to enhance the security system and has been doing so for the last 20 years.

You can maybe bring something through the system, but what point would it prove? I don't know.

• (1600)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Gouk.

Madame St-Hilaire.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good afternoon, gentlemen. Thank you for coming here today.

I would like to go back to your student/teacher example. Generally, when we begin a class we are given a course plan. I would have liked to hear you talk about official languages. You talked about appointments. In practical terms, what is your organization doing to comply with official language requirements? You may be appointing responsible people, but how can you ensure in practical terms that official language requirements are met?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: At CATSA headquarters, second-language courses are provided to all senior executives as first step. Second, with respect to client's services, we have to ensure that service providers put people able to speak both official languages on each line. That becomes more difficult in some parts of Canada. This is why we decided to use our communication centre. A passenger who did not receive the service he or she expected could call the communication centre directly, and there people could provide service in either official language without any problem.

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: As a francophone, I might find myself dealing with an officer who did not speak French, and I would be obliged to use the telephone to obtain the same services as a Quebecker or a bilingual Canadian standing beside me.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: But the reverse is true as well. In Quebec airports where people speak less English, the communication centre provides complementary service to ensure that the other language is available and high-quality service can be provided over all.

I am not saying that we do not have bilingual people at the points of service. However, if the person receiving the service is not satisfied, or does not understand the message correctly, that person can use a different system, which is provided in support of the front-line service.

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: I believe I understand what you are saying, and I wish to remain respectful. However, I do not believe that the problems in Quebec are as significant as those in the rest of Canada when it comes to providing services in French.

Security is an important issue for you. When I arrive somewhere, be it in Quebec or elsewhere in Canada, I would like to have access to two significant components of security as easily as the person standing beside me. I do not want to have to use the telephone so that someone can explain potential hazards to me. I do not want to be taken hostage because you did not decide officers had to speak both French and English. This is the second time you are appearing before this committee. I do not believe there are bilingual officers at all points of service. And it is not true that a francophone officer who does not speak English would be hired in our province. I am 95 per cent certain of that.

•(1605)

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Well, I will take 5 remaining per cent to say that, in some airports, there are unilingual francophone officers. There have been incidents, and we have used the communication centre to ensure that people receive service in the second language. We cannot draw any conclusions. This does not apply anymore in Quebec than it does in the rest of Canada.

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: If I understand correctly, you have not made any specific commitment other than the telephone or communication service.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: I will provide more details on another occasion. We ensure that we assess all service providers in Canada working in airports where service must be provided in both languages. There is even a bonus—which they may or may not receive if they do not provide service in both languages. So we are taking practical measures. However, to ensure that quality services are provided, we have added an additional measure, provided by the communication centre. The first measure is that suppliers do not receive their end-of-year bonus if they do not provide service in both official languages where required.

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: You talked about a pre-screening program for air travellers. I am not sure I understand what that is. What exactly does the program involve? Does it have anything to do with the passenger list requested by the U.S.?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: I was talking about the air travellers security charge that each passenger is required to pay. Is that what you are asking?

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: No. You said you wanted to talk about flexibility and innovation. I have that in English.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Oh, I see. The airport of the future.

At present, the 35 million air travellers processed in Canada are all screened in the same way. We are trying to determine whether we can process people who do not represent a threat more quickly. We would like to be certain that people who do represent a threat are processed much more painstakingly than they are at present.

Using our existing personnel, we would like to deploy resources in the right places rather than processing everyone in the same fashion. We are looking at a risk-based approach, rather than an approach based on the regulations currently applied.

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: I do not understand what criteria you use to determine that one person represents a risk while another does not. Do you look at criminal records, do you look at the trip?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: No. The pre-screening program for low-risk passengers, which is called the trusted traveller program, would require a list of references to be used whenever someone applies to become a part of the program. This is similar to what Customs does with CANPASS programs. An investigation is conducted, and if the applicant does not represent a threat, he or she is granted a pass with biometric identification features that will allow him or her to be screened more quickly.

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: Thank you.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Mr. Chairman, I would like to add some details about the trusted traveller program, which Mr. Gouk mentioned earlier.

We would like to take it further and allow low-risk passengers to make an appointment to be screened at a given screening point. This would save them a two-hour wait. At present, airline companies at all airports are asking passengers to arrive two hours before departure. With the system, trusted passengers could call and set up an appointment for screening. For example, if the passenger's plane was scheduled to depart 5:00 p.m., the appointment could be set for 4:25 p.m. The passenger would be screened within a minute or two of arrival.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Karygiannis.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair. If I have some time left I'd like to share it with my colleague, because I know he has to go.

I have a couple of questions for you. I'm not trying to fear-monger, but I'm sure that a bazooka, about this big, would be kind of hard to put through security. The next thing I know, I'll be hearing about a tank going through. I find that comment is certainly fear-mongering, and I find it's certainly not appropriate.

I was wondering if you could comment on that.

In that respect, I'm going to turn it over to my colleague Francis for the remainder of my time. And Mr. Chair, I'd like to come back on the second round.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Mr. Chair, obviously the bazooka annoys me also, but I have to live with the examples that are given to me. I sincerely hope that a bazooka would not be able to go through, or I'm not doing my job perfectly, and I would come back before you and hand in my resignation.

•(1610)

The Chair: Mr. Scarpaleggia.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank the parliamentary secretary for splitting his time with me. I have to leave in a few minutes.

You mentioned, Mr. Duchesneau, that you will begin screening or monitoring passenger behaviour a little more. That begs the question of why, four years after 9/11, we have not been doing that already and why we can't accelerate progress toward your goal of fully monitoring passenger behaviour.

That would be the first question.

The second point concerns a comment you made when you said you're doing a remarkable job intercepting potential weapons. How do we know? For obvious security reasons, the results of dummy tests, I guess you could call them, are not available, and obviously I don't take issue with that.

Third, where do you source your explosives detection systems? Internationally, are there many suppliers of such systems, and how do you know you're getting the best one? Do you have the best system in the world for detecting explosives, to your knowledge? Does your system detect any manner of explosive, including the most sophisticated plastic sheet explosives?

Fourth, do you rotate your screeners so that they don't become dull, in a sense? I mean that in a non-pejorative sense. Obviously, doing a repetitive job over and over would mean that people just generally would be less sharp in those situations.

Last, I'm just curious, on Air Canada there are no knives other than plastic knives, but on Air France there are real big stainless steel knives. One, is Air France being delinquent or careless? Two, for the safety of the Canadian passenger, why isn't there a standard for any airline entering Canada that they all have plastic knives, if that's indeed what's best, or that they can all have steel knives? Why isn't there a standard?

Those are my questions.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Mr. Chair, those are five good questions.

Screening of passenger behaviour has to go through Transport Canada. Transport regulates the way we do business. Even though we have the idea, we need to convince Transport Canada. And I hope you're going to help me to make sure we succeed in making these changes.

In terms of explosive detection systems, I think we have a state-of-the-art system right now. Yes, we detect sheet explosives. The real question is, are we fighting the last war or are we fighting the next one? We just need to make sure we answer that question. I think we've gone as far as we can with technology. If we compare ourselves with other countries, we are miles ahead in what we are doing.

Once again, Transport Canada will determine what type of equipment we can use or not use. We work very closely with Transport Canada and they work with us in trying to find new equipment that can be used at screening points.

You asked about infiltration tests. If you take a country like Israel, for instance, when they have a score of over 85% it seems that the system is flawed. They need to make efforts to penetrate the system with a new weapon, anything new that cannot be detected. That's a cat and mouse game.

As I said, I don't think I would be satisfied if my results were 100% detection, because that would send the wrong message. So we need to find the proper balance. I can tell you that the images and equipment used before 9/11 were in the order of about 50—that is, 50 images or weapons that could be brought through the system. Right now we are using 2,500 different images for weapons. The game changed after 9/11, and we have to take that into consideration.

Regarding rotation, yes, there's a regulation that we have to change people every 15 minutes. But we are disputing that, Mr. Chair, because studies have shown that people with very specific skills would do a better job if they stayed on for an hour, not 15 minutes. You need to know, Mr. Chair, that this—

• (1615)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Mr. Duchesneau, sorry, I wasn't clear. I didn't mean rotation within the same day, but rotation every month or two months.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: We have a regulation. There are five screeners on each screening line and they have to rotate every 15 minutes. I'm not sure it makes sense. As I said, we are disputing that, and we're receiving support from scholars and academics to prove that people would do better jobs if they stayed on for a longer period.

As for knives, why is it that Air France and many other airlines around the world use real knives? Well, once again, that would be a question to ask Transport Canada, because it is the regulator. The difference with Air France and many others is that they are not neighbours to the United States.

I would once again bring forward the idea of lighters. Why is it that we have to intercept lighters? Well, the answer is very simple; if we don't do that at Canadian airports, Canadian airlines will not be able to fly directly to American cities. We have to take decisions and we need to take into account every aspect of the problem.

Mr. Karygiannis was using his glass. Yes, a glass could do a lot of damage. A fork could do much more damage than a knife. But we have to abide by the regulations. We will have to have a lengthy discussion to determine exactly what are the problems we are facing with the regulations that we now have.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: In terms of monitoring passenger behaviour, have the delays been because of lagging Transport Canada regulations?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Well, we cannot do anything other than what the regulation says right now. I think it would need much more effort to change that.

I hope that will be one of your recommendations, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Mr. Batters. Oh, I'm sorry, Mr. Gouk.

Mr. Jim Gouk: Mr. Duchesneau, I just had one more question with regards to the trusted traveller program relative to the comment you just made.

It was always my understanding that the trusted traveller program was going to operate the same way as NEXUS, or any other line like that where you would have some kind of card, whether it be one with a retinal scan or whatever, and you would go through an automated location subject to a spot check, the same as any other type that I know of. But if I understood you correctly, you said one would still go through a security line, but just have some kind of appointment to go through a particular security line that would be faster for some, in some way.

Could you maybe explain that a little better?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: It's not our message that being a trusted traveller will prevent you from going through a screening line; you will have to go through a screening line, but you will face a different type of screening. Yes, there will still be a screening, which has to be done.

Mr. Jim Gouk: If I can follow up on that, then, you allow these employees through with no screening, subject to a random check. Why in God's name can we do that with an employee working the airport, but not with a trusted traveller? What's the problem in getting some program like that going?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Because we live in a world after 9/11, and passengers represent a threat that we need to address. We're also addressing non-passenger screening; we screened over 500,000 employees last year through our program. It was not yet fully implemented, so the number will rise. So we are also screening people who work at airports after they have gone through a background check.

Mr. Jim Gouk: Do you or do you not at times let airport employees through to the secure side of the airport without a check?

• (1620)

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Do you mean without a screening, or without a background check?

Mr. Jim Gouk: Without a screening. At given times, they—

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Sure, we are doing that today.

Mr. Jim Gouk: So you would do that, but you wouldn't do it with a pre-screened security checked, background-checked passenger?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Once again, Mr. Chair, we are trying to improve the system we have in place, but the question Mr. Gouk is asking is Transport-Canada related, not CATSA-related.

Mr. Jim Gouk: Interesting.

Thanks.

The Chair: You have a couple of minutes, Mr. Batters, if you want.

Mr. Dave Batters (Palliser, CPC): Absolutely. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First of all, thank you very much, Mr. Duchesneau, and your colleagues, for appearing before us today.

I'm actually going to start to pick up along the lines of this trusted traveller card. My understanding is that you're saying there could be a card and that you'd envision some kind of a lesser screening process perhaps, but people would still have to go through the metal detectors.

Well, at the Ottawa airport a few weeks ago I found something that was very disturbing. Actually, I and a colleague of mine on this committee, Andrew Scheer, were catching a flight back home. Because of the business of this House, the important work that we all do here, we were delayed and running very late that day. It was a 2 o'clock flight that we were catching and we were standing in line for security at 1:30 in the afternoon.

This is not going to be a political statement, Mr. Karygiannis, so allow me to finish. But we witnessed a number of cabinet ministers whipping through to the front of the line as they came forward. We

thought, what is going on here? Is this because they're cabinet ministers? What we found out when we got to the front of the line was that it just kept happening, that people kept coming to the front ready to go through security. Nip and tuck, we were already close to missing our airplane.

It sounds like what we're talking about with this trusted traveller card is that if you're Air Canada super-élite customers, it just so happens they will walk you to the front of the security line and go ahead of security and ahead of all the good people who are waiting in line and may be flying different airlines. We were WestJet customers, for example, and WestJet, I guess, doesn't have that "in".

My problem with this is that Air Canada can institute whatever type of quick line they want upstairs, or within their realm, but as soon as I get to security, sir... As soon as there are the tapes there with CATSA written on them, then that's your domain; that's not Air Canada's domain. I had a real problem and voiced it, and said, "This is CATSA, not Air Canada, so you can go to the back of the line and wait with the rest of these good people".

So I'd like to ask you directly, sir, are you aware this happens? Are you aware of an arrangement with Air Canada super-élite customers, where Air Canada people dressed in nice jackets walk people to the front of the line, while other good air travellers are forced to endure watching them go ahead, when they're running late for airplanes themselves? Are you aware this happens, and how does this happen? This could be a basic issue of respect for people.

I'd like to know if you are aware of it, and how is it being facilitated? Are there special considerations given to Air Canada? Granted Air Canada is a major player in our air industry, but there are a lot of other airlines that are disadvantaged by this.

I'm going to give you a chance to answer.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Mr. Chair, I have Super Elite status and I go through the line just like any other passenger does. We don't have priority lanes.

Every airline has the possibility, when a passenger is late, to bring the passenger to the front of the line to be screened so as not to miss the flight. It's not related to Air Canada. It could be WestJet or any other company. That is the solution.

The second thing is that the airport authority has the task of bringing passengers to us. When passengers are brought to the front of the line for whatever reason, we screen them and give them access quickly so that we will have no late flights whatsoever.

Mr. Dave Batters: Mr. Duchesneau, I'd urge you to look into that a little bit. Perhaps we could leave it at that.

These were individuals who kept coming to the front of the line and who were not running late for their flights. Granted, there were some ministers who were late, but it kept happening.

I asked the lady from Air Canada how this works. She simply explained that if you're an Air Canada Super Elite person and you phone ahead, they'll take you to the front of the line, late or otherwise.

That's unacceptable, sir, and you need to look into it.

• (1625)

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: I'll check further on that.

The Chair: Monsieur Carrier.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Carrier (Alfred-Pellan, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Duchesneau, I would like to go back to the issue of French, which was raised by my colleague. Since the government agency you run is new, being established only in 2002, why did you not get off on the right foot? You admit in your report that more work needs to be done; you stated that you did not get a good start but that progress has been achieved since then. Why was it not possible to provide bilingual service throughout Canada right from the start?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Mr. Chairman, we'll always be the kind of witnesses to tell you that we have improved the established system. I have here the report that will be tabled tomorrow by the Commissioner of Official Languages. We have taken exemplary action on three of the points raised. We have spoken to the people at the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages and, given the fact that our organization is young, they are very satisfied with our work.

Could we improve the way we do business? Of course. Next year, I will reappear before you and no doubt talk about aspects that we need to improve. However, given the short amount of time that we have—and without bragging, Mr. Chairman, I am rather proud of the results and the work that has been done.

Mr. Robert Carrier: Good. Let's hope that things will improve, as you say.

My second question pertains to the United States. How are your activities linked to American priorities? Recently, I heard that representatives from the American government were going to be requesting the passenger list for flights from Canada that fly over American territory, in order to ascertain whether or not the planes are carrying people on their suspect passenger list. I'm wondering if we really are working together as far as security is concerned; we do share this North-American continent.

Rather, why wouldn't the list of suspect individuals be provided to the Canadian authorities so that they can spot these passengers instead of waiting for them to fly over American territory or until planes are diverted, as was the case recently with Air France?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: That is a good question, Mr. Chairman. Just yesterday, a Korean Air Lines plane had to go back to Japan because there was someone on board who should not have been. Certain Canadian flights, such a flight between Vancouver and Ottawa, for example, fly over American territory. If we fly over their territory, they want to have this list: that's the rule. The representative from Transport Canada would certainly be in a better position to answer this question.

Indeed, we do try to ensure that our procedures dovetail with those of the Americans. This is done in a spirit of collaboration and cooperation which is in the interest of both countries. We have had to adapt our procedures, but this was in everyone's interest: the passengers, the airports and the airline companies.

Mr. Robert Carrier: Given that we are two neighbouring countries and friends, it is surprising that such information is not shared, and that the passenger is not intercepted until flying over their territory. It would be simpler to question or detain these people for questioning before they board the plane. That does not appear to be done reciprocally, and that is what surprises me.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: This part of the work is done by the RCMP and CSIS. This is not solely a Canadian problem. Several flights originating in Europe, for example, have been returned or diverted because it was discovered that somebody was on board who was not entitled to be. Consequently, this is a problem that goes far beyond Canada-US relations.

The list of suspect passengers, this no-fly list, comes under the jurisdiction of the RCMP and CSIS, and not CATSA, but we are the one that suffers the consequences.

Mr. Robert Carrier: But since this is a safety issue, do you not think you should have access to this list so that you can intercept people? I would like to hear your views on that.

• (1630)

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: This is a safety issue, and this involves the whole problem I was referring to earlier. Since the word "safety" appears in the name of our agency, people think we are responsible for all aspects of safety.

However, if you are asking me for an opinion as an expert on safety, my answer would of course be yes. We should have this information long before an individual can board the aircraft. That is precisely what we are trying to do with the low-risk travellers pre-selection program we were talking about earlier. We want to get the information we need to distinguish among people when they are at a screening point.

Mr. Robert Carrier: However, you have to be familiar with the screening done by the US to ensure that this is indeed an undesirable passenger.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Definitely.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Robert.

Mr. Bonin.

Mr. Raymond Bonin (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Over a number of years, airport grants will be reduced by some 60%. Have there been discussions as to how they will bring the impact of that reduction to their tenants? Sixty percent of \$600,000 is over \$300,000. Will you expect savings for government agencies that are renting from all of these airports? Have they not had discussions?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Mr. Chair, we haven't had discussions on the matter. I think these discussions will take place with Transport Canada more than with CATSA. Right now, we're trying to negotiate with airports to pay our fair due for the spaces we are using that are not related to pre-board screening and hold-back screening.

Mr. Raymond Bonin: I can't yet tell Ralph Goodale to cut your budget? Not yet?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Not yet. Please don't.

Mr. Raymond Bonin: I'm just being facetious.

[*Translation*]

My second question has to do with the issue raised by Ms. St-Hilaire regarding staff who can speak both official languages.

I found out about this situation when I was hired at Air Canada. When a person starts working for a new company, the salary is not very attractive. I do not think it is in your area either. Service in the two languages is not provided on the pretext that it is impossible to find bilingual individuals.

Is there a clause on this in your collective agreement? Do you have a union?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Yes.

Mr. Raymond Bonin: Is there a clause which provides that if you cannot find bilingual people, you can hire people temporarily until you do find some bilingual candidates?

We are told that the company hired a unilingual francophone or anglophone because there was no one else. However, these people get permanent positions. They become permanent employees once they are hired, and then the company says that they could not find any bilingual people at the time. In my case, there were 16 candidates and I was the only bilingual person. The company decided that it had one bilingual, and simply hired unilingual candidates after that.

Perhaps there is no clause regarding the number of bilingual positions in your collective agreement.

When I was at Air Canada, in Sudbury, there was one bilingual candidate out of 16. After it was negotiated that a certain percentage of employees should be bilingual, there were about six bilingual individuals out of 16. The figure was based on the demand and the population in the region.

If you don't have this clause in your collective agreement, I think it would be important to get it, otherwise we will always be told that a unilingual individual was hired because no one else could be found. Is there such a clause in your collective agreement?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Mr. Chairman, the collective agreements are signed with each of our service providers in the country. At the moment, we are encouraging them to hire bilingual people by means of a bonus paid at the end of the year. We are talking about fairly significant amounts of money. Mr. Grilli could add to this answer.

It really bothers me when people go to certain parts of the country and cannot get the services to which they are entitled. Our only lever is financial, but it is not for agents.

I'm going to tell you a little story. In some airports, people get a better salary if they work for McDonald's or Burger King. In some airports, it is therefore difficult to recruit qualified people who can speak both languages, for example.

Mr. Raymond Bonin: Why could you not establish the percentage of bilingual staff required at each location? In certain places, the figure might be 20 per cent, and in others, 100 per cent. For example, if there are eight employees in Sudbury, we could require that six of them must be bilingual. If there were only two, it would be clear immediately that this was inadequate and an effort would be made to hire more. At the moment, we do not know what percentage of bilinguals is required. When there is one, we say there is one.

• (1635)

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Yes, but we have to go beyond that.

Mr. Chairman, I think this is a good suggestion. We have made a note of it. We are about to standardize the collective agreements. We have 15 service suppliers, and the situation varies considerably. This may be one of the points that we will suggest to place more emphasis on the official languages. So I have made a careful note of the suggestion, and I trust we will have been able to implement it by the time I next appear before you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Miller.

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just to go back to Mr. Duchesneau and something Mr. Batters was talking about, I can tell you from experience that late passengers do not get taken to the front of the line and sped through. There's no effort by anyone to put you near the front of the line, although I have seen cabinet ministers come in and get put to the front.

Mr. Grilli, is there a system that could be put in place for the speedy but safe movement of government officials, MPs, and what have you? Nobody should be rushed through and treated as totally non-suspect. You should still have to go through the screening machines. But I can see some processes put in place, perhaps special identification for MPs or other government officials, that could help speed up the process safely. As a bonus, it could speed up your whole security line.

Mr. Jacques Grilli (Vice President, Operations, Canadian Air Transport Security Authority): This is exactly what we've been talking about with respect to the trusted traveller program. We could not have a program for one type of individual. But we could have a program to allow people known not to be a threat to have a different or faster way of being screened. They could have a fast-track lane or a different type of lane. They could be treated like passengers with almost no carry-on, people who travel domestically with only a briefcase, as opposed to passengers going to an international flight with all kinds of baggage.

Let me make a point with respect to Air Canada bringing people to the front of the line. This is an option that all airlines have, including WestJet. This is an option that airports have. These people have to be escorted by the airline to the front of the line, or someplace in the line, depending on which airport you're talking about. In Ottawa, on domestic, there is no such thing as a priority lane. In Vancouver, however, there is an official priority lane. This is controlled not by CATSA but by the airlines. The difference between Air Canada and WestJet may be that Air Canada has first-class passengers, whereas WestJet has just one class of passengers.

Mr. Larry Miller: I'm not sure I buy that, but I can tell you that I'm going to take it up with the airlines if I see it happening again.

• (1640)

Mr. Jacques Grilli: You should, yes.

Mr. Larry Miller: Mr. McGarr, in my experience, there are distinct inconsistencies between machines. I mean machines you send baggage through as well as machines you walk through. I'll give you an example that just happened today. It happened on four treks in a row through Ottawa and Toronto.

I have three belts. One will not ring the machine off. I went through four consecutive times, round trips, for a total of eight, and it never went off. I came through today and it went off. I said to the guy, "It's the same—everything". He said, "It's got to be your boots". I said, "No, it isn't". But anyway, when they went through with all their wands and what have you, nothing happened. This isn't the first time this has happened. I see on your title that you're responsible for risk and quality. What do you have in place to make sure that the quality of your machines is consistent? From experience, I know they're not.

Mr. Kevin McGarr (Vice President, Risk and Quality, Canadian Air Transport Security Authority): Mr. Chairman, consistency is the main goal of the quality assurance program that we have in place. The settings on all of the machines are consistent, and they are standard; however, I suspect that at times there can be very slight deviations. That is why we have Nav Canada come in and constantly monitor this to make sure they are set exactly as they are supposed to be. I have noticed that at some airports my watch will set off the metal detector and at others it will not. There is a very fine tuning of the equipment. It's testimony, I think, to the level of sophistication of the equipment we have in place.

Mr. Larry Miller: I've seen it too many times. Your answer is probably right, but I still think there are probably too many discrepancies.

I have one other question, and I'm not sure who can answer this. Is there any item that would normally be deemed to be something you couldn't take through security, but that I or someone else could take through security because of my beliefs, religious or otherwise? I don't have anything specific in mind, but I'd like an answer.

A voice: A knife.

Mr. Larry Miller: Well, I guess a knife.

A voice: A kirpan.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: They're not allowed. It's in the regulations. Our lawyer can speak on that.

Mr. Larry Miller: So that's blank? There's nothing that can get through there because of that?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: No.

Mr. Larry Miller: Okay, that's good.

Those are all the questions I have.

The Chair: Mr. Karygiannis, go ahead, please.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Thank you.

Mr. Duchesneau, you mentioned one thing, the no-fly list. Are you aware that we have a no-fly list, or was this something you were led into saying because somebody else had said it? In Canada, do we have a no-fly list?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Airline companies in Canada check the names of passengers before they board a plane.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Again, does Transport Canada have a no-fly list, sir?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Not that I know of.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: So you were referring to the DHP list then, or designated high profile, that Air Canada has?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Yes.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Okay.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: We use the same words—you're right.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: As long as we're clear there are absolutely no no-fly lists.

I have a couple of questions for you.

You said that at some point in time CATSA should be aware of who's flying in, and you should have all this kind of information available to you, so that when somebody just shows up with a boarding pass you're able to do a little bit more screening of them. Isn't that done right now by the airlines? Are you saying that you also want to do the same checks as the airline does?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Mr. Chair, what we're trying to do is to facilitate the screening of passengers to make sure people will go through much faster. What we're trying to do is segregate passengers. I think the minister was clear, when he was here the last time, when he said that he does not understand why an 80-year-old grandmother has to go through the same type of screening as others. I firmly believe he's right on that. So we need to find ways to segregate people in order to process people quickly.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Let me go back again to the question and be a little bit more specific. Are you asking to be able, at some point in time, to access the personal information of a passenger by just having their boarding card?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: The information we're seeking is mainly information that the airline already has. I gave the example of looking at a person who has come to the screening point. Does he have a one-way ticket? Did he pay cash? This is information that's already on the ticket. So we would determine that this person, given the way he's bought the ticket, could represent a threat or not. It's a threat assessment that we would be doing.

•(1645)

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: In a lot of airports, especially in the major hubs, Vancouver, Toronto, or Montreal, you have a lot of travellers fly through who speak neither English nor French. I'm just wondering if there's any diversity training of your officers and if there are any other languages that you offer service in? For example, one-third of my constituents are Chinese speaking, Mandarin or Cantonese. Do you have somewhere a bonus, let's say, for the people who are actually offering other languages besides French and English, to facilitate our ethnic diversity in this country?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: As I mentioned, Mr. Chair, we speak 101 languages at CATSA. We just did the survey about a month ago. We're trying to give service in more than just French and English. The name of the game is making sure passengers will not find going through a screening point a hassle. We just want to make sure people will flow quickly and that they will receive number one quality service.

So yes, we can give service in a different language.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: In the city of Toronto, if you were to call a particular number, you could get service in whatever language you're looking for. So if my parents—for example, my mother doesn't speak a word of English—were to go through the airport and she did not understand what the officer was telling her, is there a number they could call to get service in a particular language?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: That's the purpose of the security communications centre, where we have the list of people speaking different languages. We could give the service in Greek, for instance, if the person doesn't speak French or English, or in Chinese or whatever. And it happens regularly. A Chinese diplomat went through the other day, and we had two screeners speaking Mandarin. They did the screening in a separate room because it was a high-ranking officer, and he was screened in his own language.

Mr. Michael McLaughlin (Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Canadian Air Transport Security Authority): Could I just add something?

The first reaction is to ask if there is somebody in that airport who speaks their language who can come and do the face-to-face screening. If the answer is yes, then they find that person. As in the case that Mr. Duchesneau just mentioned, they would bring that person and they would do the screening. The individual might have a slight delay, but not very long. If there wasn't a person identified in that airport, we'd then contact the security communications centre, and from that point we would look across Canada for someone who was available who could walk the person through the processes that were going to occur as part of the screening effort.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Batters.

Mr. Dave Batters: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I have three questions, but first I want to get back to this notion about these lines for a minute—30 seconds, hopefully. Mr. Grilli felt the need to address this, so I'm going to throw this back to him, I guess.

Now, my understanding is that in Vancouver there is a fast-track line that the airlines have somehow set up. So some people qualify

for a fast track. I'm not exactly sure why that would be or what that would have to do with CATSA. Here in Ottawa, what I was told was that this has to do with Air Canada super-elite customers, who are able to take advantage of this service.

Your comment was that any airline could rush any passenger who requested it to the front of the line. Well, I don't think anyone in this room is going to buy that, sir. I mean, why would we queue up? Why would we stand in line? It would just be anarchy. For you to say that this has nothing to do with CATSA is absolutely bizarre, because it's your line. It's the CATSA ribbons, and we're standing in that line.

You're telling us here today that any airline has the ability to bring any passenger to the front of the line. Maybe you can explain that to me.

Mr. Jacques Grilli: This is a system that has been in existence since screening began many years ago, and it's still in existence today. We do not manage the lines outside of the screening point. We take charge of the process once you reach the first level of our greeter. Whoever managed the line in front of our screening point belongs to the airport. It's not CATSA that does that.

That being said, each airline has the right to accompany a passenger, whether that passenger would be handicapped, whether that passenger—

•(1650)

Mr. Dave Batters: No, no, we're not talking about handicapped passengers. That's a different matter, sir. Let's not talk about that.

Mr. Jacques Grilli: Okay. Whether that passenger is handicapped or whether he's a late passenger who comes in at the desk, the regulation for that is that he must be accompanied by an official from the airline.

In Vancouver, they do it differently. What they do in Vancouver is they have an official from the airport at that priority lane, and they check the boarding pass. The airlines—all the airlines—when they want to send a customer through that line, they put a special sticker on the boarding pass, which is marked "Vancouver".

Mr. Dave Batters: I understand that, sir. I'm going to cut you off there because I want to get on to some other points.

We're not talking about late passengers here. My problem is the specific program afforded to one airline—Air Canada's super-elite customers. That's what I want to see addressed, and I'll be asking about it next time CATSA comes before us.

Mr. Jacques Grilli: The thing is, sir—

Mr. Dave Batters: I'm going to go on, sir.

I just have quick questions and would really appreciate quick answers. Everybody would like to get out of here, I think.

Recently there was a report from the Auditor General questioning if we were truly doing a better job in security screening. I'd like Mr. Duchesneau or one of your colleagues to comment specifically about Sheila Fraser's recent report. What is your reaction to her comments?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: We accept her comments. In her report she praised the work being done by CATSA—how we deployed equipment. The screening is much better than it was before 9/11, there's no doubt in my mind. Can we improve the system? Absolutely.

Mr. Dave Batters: Thank you.

Are you doing a better job monitoring uniform pieces since the incident that came up in the fall? I believe 91 badges went missing in the first nine months of 2004, and there was much hubbub about that. It was a big story. I trust you have some systems in place to keep better track of uniform pieces and badges.

I wonder if you can comment on that a little bit, sir.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: That's another good example of how we build on failures of the system. We are now putting in place a system where a screener has to enter his identification card and use his fingerprint to show that he's in the restricted area. The point is that the uniform itself will not allow you to enter the restricted area; you need a pass to do so. We've installed a system that will have a better check and balance of that.

Mr. Dave Batters: Are there systems in place so when someone loses a badge—the main focus was on the 91 badges—they immediately have to report that to their supervisor?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: They do. As I mentioned when Mr. Bonin asked a question about the official languages, we've added a financial incentive. When part of the uniform is lost or stolen, the service provider pays \$900 in fines. It's funny, but ever since we put that in place we haven't had any more problems.

Mr. Dave Batters: We talked a little bit about U.S. no-fly zones today. I visited with Monsieur Carrier, and we're not quite sure as to the final answer on this. Do Canadian authorities, whether it's CATSA or whomever, have access to U.S. no-fly lists? Do we check those lists, and are there systems in place that keep individuals who may be on a U.S. no-fly list, a terrorist list, from boarding domestic flights that don't fly over U.S. air space?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Once again, we don't do that assessment. It's done by the RCMP and CSIS.

Mr. Dave Batters: But do Canadian authorities have that information, or can you speak to that?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: I don't know.

Mr. Dave Batters: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Karygiannis.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: So we're completely clear—and there's absolutely no headline tomorrow that any of my colleagues across the way might want to grab—other airlines have the opportunity to move passengers flying first class to the front of the line throughout the system. It's not one airline, Air Canada.

Mr. Jacques Grilli: It's all the airlines. We don't ask why they do that.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: It's not ministers who are afforded that opportunity.

• (1655)

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: On the contrary, when we talk to ministers about trusted travellers, they want to stay away from that.

Mr. Dave Batters: I wasn't going to make that suggestion.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: I can see headlines.

I have a couple of questions for you. There are airlines coming in from the States to Canada with passengers who are making connecting flights to, for example, New Delhi. I understand that when baggage comes in here, you still have to take it through a security check, and the speed of that is something like a minute a bag.

Air Canada is trying to beef up travelling—it was Canada 3000 in the past. I understand Air India is going to fly directly to Amritsar. What speed or what cooperation do you have with American...? Can this be enhanced and put forward more quickly? For example, if a 747 is going to New Delhi with 300 or 400 passengers, 100 of them are from the States, and they have half an hour to connect, that might not afford you a lot of time to go through. Do we have enough machines now to look after this? What is your forecast?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Maybe Mr. Grilli can complete the answer, but the system we have in place is quick. I talked about the five-level system. Machines and human beings make the call. It takes less than a minute to screen bags. We haven't had any push-back because of delays due to the machine not being able to process the luggage.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: So you're meeting all your targets and there are absolutely no delays in the flights.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: No, it's state-of-the-art.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Karygiannis.

Mr. Duchesneau, I have a couple of very quick questions.

You are the one who raised the spectre of the Maginot Line. You are the one who raised the spectre of fighting the next war, not the last one. You've talked about the more than 700,000 objects you've seized. You've also told us that you're a delivery agency, that is, Transport Canada makes regulations and you have to follow them.

So when you talk about risk assessment, and you've raised the spectre of these terrorists being trained in eastern places, we all read *Time* magazine and the newspaper, we all know this stuff, but what special information do you have then that the risk has gone up? Indeed, what is the risk? Maybe the risk is down now.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: We had Mr. Judd, head of CSIS, testify before a committee explaining that, yes, we were facing a threat we need to assess. My comment was mainly that we cannot put our guard down. When I talk with colleagues from around the world, I see we are all facing the same thing.

The Chair: What committee was Mr. Judd before?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: I don't know, but it was—

The Chair: So it was in the newspaper.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: No, I had a report of his testimony.

The Chair: So you don't know if the threat is up or down, just that still there's a threat out there somewhere.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Minister McLellan also talked about that. That's where we take our information.

The Chair: So you don't know whether the threat is elevating or declining.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: No. What I'm saying is that we need to be making sure we screen passengers thoroughly so we can face the threat.

The Chair: You have all your senior staff here. How many passengers fly on one-way flights, on one-way tickets?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: I don't have that information.

The Chair: So how do you know that's an elevated risk?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Because that's the information we share with other countries.

The Chair: Who's "we"?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Countries doing profiling find that passengers travelling on a one-way ticket being paid cash represent a higher risk.

The Chair: I see.

How many passengers flying WestJet pay cash?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: I don't know. I don't have that information.

The Chair: So you don't know. All right.

I find all of this stuff rather trite. I find that it's offensive to me personally when you talk about these things. I've been in airports, seen people paying cash, flying WestJet. It has something to do with the nature of the marketplace. I really don't believe that the next wave, if they are out there, are going to go to airports and buy tickets with cash. They've already done that. So I find what you're saying very offensive.

Second, I wanted to follow up on what we had heard in our committee travels with respect to resources. You raised the issue of moving resources around within your operation. We heard in eastern Canada that your agency would ask that certain structural changes be made because of regulations imposed by Transport Canada. In fact, your agency would plead poverty and in the end the airport authority would swallow the cost. Are you aware of this?

• (1700)

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Give me a specific example, because I don't buy that, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: I'll give you the example. Halifax airport told us they had to pay \$100,000 out of their own pocket.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: For what?

The Chair: To change some doors around.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: I don't have any details on that.

The Chair: We'll give you the details, then. Either you're unaware of it or you don't believe what they've told us.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Maybe there's a bit of both, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: You think so. All right.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Yes, I do think so.

The Chair: We also heard it in western Canada. Airports are saying that CATSA imposes requirements upon the airport authority and then pleads poverty.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: If managing the taxpayers' money properly is a problem, then I plead guilty to that. We're just trying to make sure the money is well spent. So when we're asking an airport authority to make a change, we usually pay for that.

The Chair: You usually pay.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: We pay for that according to the rules given by the Auditor General and the rules given by Treasury Board. We don't spend the money just like that. We have rules that we have to abide by, and we're doing that.

The Chair: I understand. But the common theme for all the airports that launched complaints with us was that CATSA would impose a change that would require a capital expenditure on behalf of the airport authority. Then CATSA would plead poverty and the airport authority would pay for it to get it going.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: My answer to that, Mr. Chair, is that I think some airport authorities saw CATSA as being Santa Claus. We decided to have very stringent measures to make sure this money was managed properly. So that's what we did.

The Chair: Conversely, Mr. Duchesneau, we were told that CATSA used its very considerable regulatory powers given to it by Transport Canada to say it must be done, and they were given little choice. In fact, they had no choice.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: We have to abide by the ICAO rule that hold-back screening equipment has to be deployed by the end of 2005. Yes, we are working within that rule.

The Chair: What does that have to do with airport authorities?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: They have to install the equipment that we are putting into place, and we have to meet the date of December 31 of this year. Certain airports had to expand to put in the equipment that we needed installed.

The Chair: Who pays for that?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: We pay for it.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much.

Thank you for coming. I'm sure that we'll see you again.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: We'd be pleased to come back.

The Chair: Okay.

We stand adjourned.

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