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Chair

The Honourable Roger Gallaway

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•(0910)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Roger Gallaway (Sarnia—Lambton, Lib.)): A belated good morning.

We welcome this morning, from CATSA, Monsieur Duchesneau, Mr. McLaughlin, and Mr. Duncan, who are here to give us a briefing on airport security.

Mr. Duchesneau, I'm certain you have some opening remarks, so please proceed.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau (President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Air Transport Security Authority): Thank you, Mr. Chair. We're delighted to be here.

[Translation]

Mr. Chairman, honourable members, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you this morning. It has been almost six months since our last discussion. I think now is a good opportunity to bring you up to speed with what's going on at CATSA.

I am proud to report that we are on track and ahead of schedule in delivering our mandate set out in the 2001 budget.

We have set up new quality improvement processes to help us become even more effective and efficient in security matters. CATSA has one priority and one alone—the security of air travellers. We fight threats every day, including threats to our credibility.

As you know, CATSA is a crown corporation that reports to Parliament through the Minister of Transport. Transport Canada is our regulator. CATSA executes the mandate.

When there is any vulnerability in the system, we examine it. And where necessary, we take corrective measures. That is part of our ongoing commitment to security through continuous improvement.

A clear example of this constant process of improvement is the scheduled review of CATSA's mandate and operations. The transport minister announced last week that he will appoint three people to a special review committee. You are fully aware that this move was no reactive event. In fact, it was legislated by section 33 of the CATSA Act that created and now governs CATSA. It states that a mandatory review of CATSA's mandate will happen five years after the creation of CATSA. We welcome the review, and all processes that will help improve our operations. You have heard us say this before, and it is worth repeating. CATSA is one link in a chain of defences. CATSA cannot and does not do security alone. It is an impossible task without the involvement and collaboration of key partners.

We work closely with police, airlines, airport authorities and Transport Canada. It is important to distinguish and understand our respective roles to get the full picture of the complexity of airport security.

Our job at CATSA is to screen passengers and their belongings to make sure no prohibited items enter a restricted area. We contribute funds to ensure police presence at airports. They intervene with both passengers and non-passengers when required. CATSA contracts the RCMP to protect selected flights.

It is now a little more than three and a half years since CATSA's creation. And I can confidently tell you that we are accomplishing what we were set up to do. And we are doing it in a cost-effective way: more than 90¢ of each dollar of our budget goes directly to frontline operations.

I would like to share some numbers with you to illustrate the scope of our task. Every year, at 89 Canadian airports, over 4,300 highly trained officers screen more than 37 million passengers and nearly 60 million pieces of luggage. In the last 12 months, three million flights carried two billion passengers around the globe. Yet, there was not a single terror attack on an airport or commercial aircraft. We are part of that global network.

What does this tell us? That we have made airports a less attractive target. And I am proud to say that CATSA—in its work with government and industry—has contributed to fortifying the air transportation system and securing the lives of air travellers. Passengers also contribute. They are also an important layer of a good security system that we must not forget. We rely on cooperation and feedback from travellers to help us perform our job efficiently and get them safely to their destination.

•(0915)

To the average traveller, CATSA's most visible function happens at screening points. Screening officers undergo rigorous training to become certified. And each year, they must undergo further training to become re-certified.

To complement our team of frontline officers, we deploy state of the art equipment. By the end of this year, we will have developed 2,500 pieces of the most current screening technology for checked baggage.

We will meet our deadline for 100 per cent screening for checked baggage by December 31, 2005. That is in line with the international deadline set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

To meet this deadline, we advanced our deployment schedule by one year. In the 2001 budget, the Canadian government committed one billion over five years for the purchase, deployment and operation of EDS at airports across the country. CATSA has successfully met the target... ahead of schedule.

[English]

I'd like to clarify one aspect of our technology. A recent media report called into question our X-ray equipment and its effectiveness in screening lead-lined film bags. CATSA and Transport Canada are working together to do our own testing. So far, the film bags we have tested are all transparent when viewed through an X-ray machine. There appears to be no way to hide any objects within a film bag.

We have put in place processes for us to test and retest every aspect of our operation. This is critically important to us. It allows us to measure quality and fortify the system. We have set up a quality assessment program and do quality assessments of our screening processes at each of our airports.

We have developed a performance measurement program for our service providers. It has built-in financial incentives to promote optimal performance. We conduct exercises at our screening points on a regular basis to ensure our readiness to respond to incidents and emergencies. We report quarterly to our board of directors on our performance. All of this quality assessment is built into our regular operations to help us mature into an agile security expert.

On top of CATSA's role of screening passengers and their belongings, CATSA also screens some 2,300 airport workers a day. These workers, who have access to restricted areas, are selected at random. Well before they are granted a restricted area pass by the airport authority, they must undergo a thorough background investigation before a security clearance is granted by Transport Canada.

CATSA is currently adding an enhanced layer to airport security. By the end of this year, we will have real-time, biometric identification systems in place in Canada's 29 largest airports. Our system of fingerprint and iris recognition technology will cover 120,000 airport workers.

When we last spoke, there were questions about the registered traveller program. This is the program designed to identify low-risk travellers and put them through expedited screening. We are making significant headway on that front. We have received approval from our board of directors to develop and implement an operational trial. We are working with Transport Canada to set the parameters of the program and we are also in discussion with airports to work out the operational issues related to the deployment of the program. So we are moving forward with a registered traveller program.

Another new development at CATSA is our work bringing together international partners. We work closely with other security agencies in Japan, Israel, Australia, and other countries. Together we share best practices and examine the latest threats. We rely on intelligence to help us respond to threats and guide the innovation of

our security system. We are working closely with Transport Canada to maintain a constant line of communication.

There is another crucial factor for us as a successful security agency. That is flexibility and agility. We cannot afford to remain static as an organization. We need the flexibility to manoeuvre and redirect our resources to target the most imminent threats. In the security business we know that advances in a terrorist's arsenal can make our defences and detection techniques obsolete. Being able to operate with flexibility and having access to timely information gives us the capability to properly assess threats and take appropriate preventive measures.

As I said earlier, we are continuously fighting threats to the system. This includes threats to the system's credibility. It is extremely important to maintain the confidence of the travelling public. After the attacks of September 11, 2001, we worked hard to rebuild the public's trust in the air security system. That confidence is back. The numbers speak volumes. Passenger traffic is now higher than in the months preceding 9/11. We are seeing a trend toward even greater traffic figures for at least the next 12 months. And yes, we do believe that effective and efficient customer service is important. But let me emphasize that nothing trumps security, and I mean nothing.

• (0920)

We are also aware that the cooperation and constant vigilance of passengers are important components of air security. Travellers are telling us that they have a high level of confidence in the system. More than 90% say they are satisfied with their experience going through a screening point. Close to 80% say that screening officers play an extremely important role in the security of air travel. This is important to us because we believe we can deliver effective, efficient security when we have the support of the people we serve.

Before I close, I'd like to reiterate what I have said time and again. No security system is 100% foolproof. That is why we implement layers of detection and prevention throughout the system. We work closely with our partners and with Transport Canada to strengthen air security. I am convinced air travellers are far safer today than they were before 9/11.

It has been nearly four years since the creation of CATSA. In that short time we have accomplished what we were tasked to do—and ahead of schedule in the most important areas. Every day we examine our operations and find ways to improve. Every day we take steps to mature into a more effective, efficient security expert.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for your time.

Before we start with questions, I'd like to remind each and every one of you about the open invitation to visit CATSA's communication centre. It is something we are very proud of, and I would like to show you this communication centre firsthand whenever you wish.

Thanks a lot.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk (British Columbia Southern Interior, CPC)): Thank you, Mr. Duchesneau.

I'm going to be a little unconventional. The normal rotation goes around through our party, but I've had to take over from Roger. He had to leave for an important situation that came up, so I'm going to actually take my position from here. Just so you understand—not as the chair.

There's just one opening comment I want to make, and it goes back to your last visit here. I've got to tell you—and there are others who agree—we were shocked at some of the things you said last time because they smacked of something I've experienced firsthand working 23 years for Transport Canada, and that's empire-building. You started talking of the Maginot Line, and CATSA employees maybe one day being the ones who meet you at your car and take your baggage, and so on. You might have been speaking extraneously, but I have concerns that not happen in any department.

You've also said in the past that the job you do—and I agree—is risk management. As you said in your presentation today, there is no such thing as 100% security. In fact, never mind what *The Passionate Eye* said; I've challenged you in the past to give me a letter so I don't get thrown in jail for trying, and I will take weapons through any airport you care to name without using any kinds of credentials or anything, just from what I know because I'm a frequent passenger. So obviously it can be broken. You do risk management.

With regard to employee security, you said 2,300—

• (0925)

Hon. Charles Hubbard (Miramichi, Lib.): Mr. Chair, just a moment. You made a very strong statement there that I object to.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Which one?

Hon. Charles Hubbard: You said that as a Canadian you could take weapons through any airport in this country.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Well, you get the minister to authorize me and I will demonstrate it. I guarantee it, Charlie. I absolutely 100% guarantee it.

Hon. Charles Hubbard: I think the challenge should be met.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): You arrange it and I'll do it.

With regard to employee security, I used to hold a restricted air-side pass. I know what security I went through for that then. It was primarily an RCMP check—background. I got fingerprinted, and they did the full background check.

Is that what's done now? If not, could you tell us exactly what an employee does to get a security check for being issued an air-side pass?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: That's a question that should be asked to Transport Canada. Before an employee gets a pass, he needs to have a security background check done by Transport Canada.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Okay. And do they issue the pass?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: They issue the pass.... They give us the permission; the airport will issue the pass. Maybe Mark will go into details explaining how it is done. But it starts with a security background check.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Yes.

Mr. Mark Duncan (Executive Vice-President and Chief Operating Officer, Canadian Air Transport Security Authority): It's a security background check that Transport administers with the assistance of the RCMP and CSIS, and they maintain all of the files of anyone across Canada. In actual fact, Canada has a system in terms of that background check that is probably better than those anywhere else in the world, because it's a national system. Following the background check, the airport is responsible for issuing the actual pass and maintaining control of it and for maintaining the secure side of the airport.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): And is it updated while an employee is there? Do they follow it? They know he's there, so there's a following...?

Mr. Mark Duncan: The layer we are now adding, in cooperation with the airports, is a biometric component to that pass. The biometric component in the pass, your fingerprint and your iris, will be contained in the pass, so there will not then be the possibility of your manufacturing it—at Kinko's, for example, a similar pass with your picture on it—and getting through. You will have to use your fingerprint.

That fingerprint will be compared with a DIN number. Because of privacy we can't have your name, but we have a number that matches, which assures that at that particular point you indeed still hold a valid clearance for that pass.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Having gone through this process, is CATSA satisfied that these employees are now not a security risk to be on the air side? Roughly how many air-side employees are there in Canada?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: There are about 120,000.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): There are 120,000, and you check 2,300 of them a day, so 2%. Are you satisfied that the remaining 98% who go through without the pass are okay?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Yes, we check 2%. You understand that 120,000 employees don't work on the same shift on the same day all the time. So there are not 120,000 employees—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Okay, so there might be 8%.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Reduce that by at least 50% to 60% and maybe you would get a proper number. We check 2,300 a day.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): But what I'm asking is, whatever the percentage—whether the remaining percentage is 98% or 50%—are you satisfied that they are not a security risk on the air side?

• (0930)

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: I'll go back to my statement. We are satisfied. That's a short answer to your question. Could anybody go through? The answer to that is yes. That's why it is important to understand that we have a multilayered system.

I have to go back to your opening statement, because it was not a question. I think it attacks the system, the way it stands. Yes, we could have a 100% foolproof system, but we would bring the industry to a halt. Is that what we want? We need to find a proper balance. I remember, in coming before this committee, that every time the question has been asked: are we doing a great job? I can tell you right away that we are doing one hell of a good job. Can we improve it? Absolutely, and that's what we're striving to do on a daily basis. Can people go through? Yes, but I'm sure that if a person goes through, one layer will pick it up eventually.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Don't get me wrong. I'm not arguing that you should be checking 100% of all employees. I think the background check is satisfactory. It's what I worked with for years when I was in Transport Canada.

However, what it then leads me to ask is, if we can do a background check—if Transport Canada can do it, or whoever—go through the RCMP, and issue a card with biometrics, or whatever, and we're satisfied that person is now an extremely low risk, to be going through with only random checks, why in God's name can't we do the same thing for travellers prepared to go through the same background checks, prepared to pay the cost associated with it, and thus reduce the workload for CATSA so they can focus their risk management on the higher-risk areas?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: I could not agree with you more.

You, Mr. Chair, brought us into the registered traveller idea about a year ago. We've been working on that. It is improving. We need to work with other partners. It's coming.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): It's my understanding, though, that the "trusted traveller" is only going to get you some priority in the line. You're still going to go through a 100% check.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: No, it's not the way we're planning to do that, Mr. Chair.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Okay, I'll—

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: It's going to be in a different area of the airport. You're going to be able to go through much more quickly, but you will still have to go through screening.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Okay.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: We screen 37 million passengers a year. We're trying to work with the known and the unknown. The unknown will be screened as they are now. The known people won't have to go through the same lengthy process, but they are going to be screened in a different way, in a safe way.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Okay.

Madam St-Hilaire.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ): Mr. Duchesneau, you seem rather impatient with the questions put by the members of our committee. I can understand that, but you must also understand our impatience when we read certain articles and reports. You boast and you say that you're convinced that air travellers have never enjoyed such security.

With all due respect, Mr. Duchesneau, let me say that this might be true, but expectations and risks are also greater. The reports we get from various places have nothing reassuring about them.

You told us this morning, and I'd like some clarification from you, that Transport Canada appointed three persons pursuant to section 33 of the act and that has nothing to do with any report or any incident whatsoever, because it had been planned. Is this really what you mean?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: That's exactly what I mean, Madam.

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: The Minister of Transportation boasts of having appointed three persons to the investigation. You can understand that I am flabbergasted as I learned, this morning, that this was basically not a reaction but something that was planned. And so this has nothing to do with the report that we saw last week.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Madam, you say that I am frustrated.

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: I understand that you did not want to contradict the minister, but clearly...

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: I am of a passionate nature, and that is perhaps why I get carried away. I am sorry, but this has nothing to do with frustration. This is what a parliamentary system is about: you are entitled to put all the questions you want, and it is my duty to give you the answers.

With regard to the appointment of the three commissioners, you can simply look at section 33 of CATSA's constituting act: it clearly states that a committee will be struck five years after the beginning of operations. The striking of this committee will soon be announced, and a report should come out in early 2007, five years after the founding of CATSA.

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: I'm well aware that it's not at all your fault, but I am under the impression this morning that the minister has appointed a few people to... I'm going to remain polite, but nowhere in his statements did he mention that section. This is another revelation we are hearing about this morning, but we will come back to that.

Mr. Duchesneau, those reports I'm alluding to have nothing to reassure the population. I'm well aware that it is impossible to frisk everybody and that we can never be 100 per cent safe. However, as parliamentarians, we have a problem when we hear horror stories as we did last week. Indeed, you are accountable to Parliament and personally, I think that you're really endeavouring to do your best. However, as parliamentarians, the information we have about airports is insufficient. It is not at all clear who is responsible for what. For instance, your organization is apparently not responsible for the gate problem at Toronto Airport. Is that true?

● (0935)

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: It's true, Mr. Chairman, and we alluded to that during a previous presentation before the committee. As you can see here, the various colours represent the different organizations responsible for various security elements.

You talk about this media report, but I could show you numerous things that were mentioned in that report that are absolutely false. We had no opportunity to react to that report before it was aired. Had we had that opportunity, we could have shown you black on white that the equipment we are using today makes it possible, as we have demonstrated earlier, to look through a film bag. We have tested the equipment that you can see here. In the case of the bags we have here, you can see a black spot. The equipment we're using can see through those bags.

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: But you won't deny that that person was able to go through all the doors and knew all the access codes.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: That is not our problem.

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: Precisely. You tell us it is not your problem. Thus, we have no other questions to ask you because it is not your responsibility. To whom, then, should we address our questions?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Responsibilities are divvied up...

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: We really do not know how to find our way in the Transport Canada system.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Mr. Chairman, I've been appearing repeatedly, and each and every time, I've explained CATSA's six mandates. If you question me about these six mandates, I would be more than pleased to give you all the details. But here you're asking me questions about responsibilities that are not mine. You have to understand that this puts me in an awkward position.

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: And the pilots, are they all searched? Is this your responsibility?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: In Canada, all passengers are searched before entering a plane. Under the law, they have to go through our control points in all 89 airports.

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: And I suppose pilots are considered as passengers.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Yes.

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: But that's not necessarily true as far as staff is concerned.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Those are what we call non-passengers. Those are the 120,000 people I was alluding to: on

average, 2,300 of those are searched daily on a random basis in Canadian airports.

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: I don't know if this is your responsibility, but you can tell me. This is something that's probably not recent, but we're hearing that, for instance, all passengers, men and women, have to surrender their nail clippers whereas, as we read in *Le Journal de Montréal* on November 12, a male passenger who was carrying a cartridge case managed to go through undetected. I'm well aware that mistakes can happen. However, my concern is that this person later complained to you and that you didn't follow suit. Do you have some kind of follow-up system for those kinds of problem areas in your system?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Mr. Chairman, we receive about 100 complaints yearly and we start an inquiry in each and every case. The first thing we do upon receiving a complaint is call the complainant. You're quoting a specific case here. Give me the name of that person and I'm going to check and tell you when exactly his complaint was received and at what time we did phone him. After this first contact, we start an investigation and in every case the complainant receives an answer.

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: His name is Alain Leclerc.

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Mr. Julian.

[Translation]

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Duchesneau, thank you for coming here today. It is important that you come to testify before the committee.

Your position is extremely important. I'm from British Columbia, as are other members here, and we all know how important safety is given that every week, we all go through airports.

There's one thing that bothers me slightly. Last month, I read that you intended to accept a second position. My understanding is that this would be a director's position on the board of a corporation. I think this would be inappropriate since your present position is so important that it should remain your first and only concern, 24 hours a day.

Do you still intend to accept this directorship?

Secondly, do you think this would be appropriate since you're responsible for airport safety in Canada?

● (0940)

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Mr. Chairman, this is a very good question and I thank you for asking it. First of all, I have resigned my position on this board. You have to understand that it was a private investment of mine in a certain corporation. I was one of the seven directors of a corporation that would eventually have been created in 2006 to become operational in 2007, after the end of my present mandate with CATSA.

At CATSA, we have a code of ethics and I've always been in full compliance with it. Because of the comments I've received about this, I decided to withdraw. I'm thus no longer a member of that corporation. I can tell you that, ever since we started laying the foundation of that corporation, I devoted a total of three hours to that activity, from 6 to 9 p.m. I have attended one meeting only, and I had clearly indicated at the very beginning that I had no time at all for that kind of activity. It was an investment just like any other investment that can be made anywhere else. The case is now closed. I'm working seven days a week at CATSA. I fully understand the relevance of what you're saying, and I can tell you that the Canadian public should not be concerned that I do not devote enough time to my responsibilities.

[English]

Mr. Peter Julian: Thank you for that answer.

I'd like to come back to security issues. You mentioned the lead-lined bags and the screening process you've undertaken to see whether you can actually see inside the bags with existing equipment. You gave us a photo. In certain airports there is high-level screening machinery that allows you to see into lead-lined bags.

You're responsible for 89 airports across the country, so I'd like you to lead us through how many airports have the high-end screening machines and how many airports have lower-level machines. What's the portrait across the country?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: I'll ask Mark to answer that question.

Mr. Mark Duncan: One of the things we were tasked with after 9/11 was to upgrade all the machines at all 89 airports. They've been upgraded to a Heimann 6040i.

Some of the upgrades require replacing the components. Downstairs, for example, the components have not been upgraded, so this particular bag shows up much darker in the machine. On our 6040i machines, you can see through the bags.

I have another one here. If the screener was unable to identify what the object is—that's a cellphone—then obviously the screener would open the bag and determine what was in it.

Here's one where you can see through the bag, but because the bag is on top of some boots, it's a little bit more difficult to identify the objects in the bag. In this particular case, the screener would likely ask for this bag to be searched to make sure there were no items.

You have to recognize that there are triggers in terms of our training that would indicate whether or not the bag would be searched. In the program, the individual went through with just what he called a battery pack, basically. One of the triggers would be a battery pack plus wires, or a battery pack plus wires plus a density—and by the way, organics show up with different colours.

Also on our machines we have the capability of doing different views. In other words, you can switch the machine so that it will give you just a black and white view; you can have an organic view; and you can have a metal view. So they can also take a layered approach, using the technology we have.

In that particular case, that would explain that different procedures were followed, depending on the clarity of the image to the particular screener and the triggers around the image they saw.

• (0945)

Mr. Peter Julian: But you're telling us today that in all 89 airports—

Mr. Mark Duncan: We have upgraded the machinery.

Mr. Peter Julian: —you're using exclusively the 6040i.

Mr. Mark Duncan: That's correct, the 6040i.

Mr. Peter Julian: At all 89 airports.

Mr. Mark Duncan: At all 89 airports.

Mr. Peter Julian: So that's Prince George or Kelowna, B.C.

Mr. Mark Duncan: That's the latest information.

Before you print that, I think we should do a formal report on that, if that's a request, because some of them are brand-new 6040i machines and some of them have been upgraded by replacing components. So the quality in some of them may differ. They may not be absolutely the same across the country.

To answer your question formally and properly, I should probably give you a full list of the types of machines. But they've all been upgraded so that we're able to see through this bag.

Again, it's a calibration. It's like an X-ray machine. So obviously there are minor variations as you go across.

Mr. Peter Julian: I think it would be useful for us to have that list.

Do I have time for another question?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): A short, final question.

Mr. Peter Julian: Okay. My short final question is, what other measures have you taken subsequent to this report coming out on CBC?

Mr. Mark Duncan: As to the measures we're taking right now, we've tested pretty well every bag we can find to ensure that we are able to.... In fact, we've tested it with triple bags. We're going to be working with Transport Canada, again, to complete tests. We have issued a bulletin to have people take a look at specific items like this.

Our preliminary findings are that the screeners are following our procedures, as they should have, but once we've completed our tests, we'll make sure that all our standard operating procedures ensure we have the best detection possible.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Thank you, Mr. Julian.

Mr. Bell.

Mr. Don Bell (North Vancouver, Lib.): Thank you.

Just as a follow-up to that line of questioning, what about checked luggage? If someone packs a film bag, a lead bag, in their checked luggage and it's locked, what do you do?

Mr. Mark Duncan: We have installed a five-level system. Depending on the size of the airport, we actually have different solutions.

For example, we might have a combined solution at a very small airport, where checked luggage would actually go through the same process as the luggage you carry on to the aircraft. After you've gone through, the checked luggage would go to the baggage make-up area and you would go into the hold room. All of that is X-rayed.

In our more sophisticated airports, we have a multi-level system. Again, it actually has the automated ability to check for densities, dark objects, etc. We actually have the ability to look at an object at a 360-degree angle, if we have a suspect bag, in order to determine precisely what's in the bag. If we're unable to do that, we would then open the bag.

For example, in Vancouver, if we discover an object right now in the transborder area, you may be called to come to a video screening room to watch the bag being opened down below to determine precisely what object you have.

Mr. Don Bell: I'm curious, from the point of view of having a piece of locked luggage. How do they open it?

Mr. Mark Duncan: In that particular instance they have a runner go get the key.

Mr. Don Bell: I see.

Further on this, what is the risk to film? I know we're into digital cameras in a big way now, but what is the risk to high-speed film? More and more people are using 400 ASA or higher.

Mr. Mark Duncan: I'm not sure. I think this bag is for film that is rated at 1,000 ASA.

• (0950)

Mr. Don Bell: Can you still see through it without damage?

Mr. Mark Duncan: We can still see through it.

Mr. Don Bell: Okay. When you have your quality assessment program, is this what would be called a "mystery shopper" in retail terms? Do you in fact send somebody who looks strangely like the chairman here to see if he can get through with a device?

Mr. Mark Duncan: We have two components.

One is our own quality review that is based on following all of our standard operating procedures for supervision, number of staff, and other procedures.

Transport Canada carries out what you would call the "total mystery shopper", where they do infiltration tests. We are unaware of what time, where, or when those tests occur. Under the legislation, Transport Canada inspectors are allowed to carry threat objects through the screening point. They conduct tests to determine whether or not we're able to find those objects.

Mr. Don Bell: Are you given the results of those tests?

Mr. Mark Duncan: We're given the results of those tests. Again, those tests are kept confidential. It's a decision of the government, Transport Canada, to keep the tests confidential. We have each of those tests, and we follow up on each of those tests.

Again, we use any form of quality testing or any kind of incident to modify and improve our standard operating procedures.

Mr. Don Bell: When you said you conduct exercises at screening points on a regular basis to ensure a readiness to respond to incidents

and emergencies, can you give me an example of what you're talking about?

Mr. Mark Duncan: One of the issues we have is that we screen 37 million passengers a year, 125,000 a day, and we make the odd error. An example might be where two similar types of bags come through the X-ray and the wrong bag is mistakenly searched. They're unable to find the object, and the individual has left with the bag. We would call that a breach.

For example, in Halifax they actually practise a situation with the airport once a week, a situation where an error was made at the screening point. If an error is made, the hold room is shut down. We find the individual or in some cases—and these are cases we do not like to get—we might have to screen everyone in the hold room again to ensure the object is found.

Mr. Don Bell: One phrase or acronym that's used here is EDS. You explained all the others, but I'm new to this committee. What's EDS?

Mr. Mark Duncan: It means "explosive detection systems".

Mr. Don Bell: Does that mean the kinds of things they do when they swab a computer, for example?

Mr. Mark Duncan: There are two elements to that. One is the swabbing, which you have seen at the checkpoint, and that's a trace unit. That trace unit heats up the chemicals and is able to do a chemical analysis to determine for explosives. The other explosive detection system is the advanced technology X-ray, or what we call the CTX, which is the 360-degree X-ray. That X-ray is calibrated to be able to look at the density of objects, and the density indicates explosives.

Mr. Don Bell: Do I have any time left?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): You have a couple of minutes yet.

Mr. Don Bell: Your answer in terms of checked luggage is that if someone puts something electronic in there, such as a computer... I travel with a digital camera and a computer. I will quite often put the accessory units—the power units, the accessory cords, and that—in my checked luggage. I'm just curious about that.

Mr. Mark Duncan: We had a situation in Ottawa a year ago in which we actually shut down the airport for a few moments for water testing equipment. In that particular case, the individual had put some university water testing equipment in the luggage. It had what looked like four pipe bombs, and there were wires in there that were connected to, as it turned out, an alarm clock. It looked like an improvised explosive device. We call those IEDs.

If your bag goes through, it detects, first of all, the dense objects and the combination that would be a bomb. That triggers, and the trigger sends it to the next level. An individual examines that. If your pile of goodies looks like an explosive device, that bag will actually be opened. Again, in Canada we match you with the bag before we open that bag.

• (0955)

Mr. Don Bell: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Thank you, Mr. Bell.

I just want to make one thing clear. I do think you do a good job, given the challenge you have. I stand by my challenge that I could take something through—or obviously other people could—but I still think that for the mandate you have, you do a good job with the challenges you have. I make the point simply to point out, as you yourself have said, that it's not 100%. My concern is that we focus—

Mr. Raymond Bonin (Nickel Belt, Lib.): I have a point of order. Mr. Chair, are you using the time of...?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): I am using my time.

Mr. Raymond Bonin: Perfect.

Hon. Charles Hubbard: Mr. Chair, I object to that. You are the chair, and the chair has rules to follow, and the rules are that we go around the table.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): The chair is taking the time of the Conservative position, so nobody is being usurped.

Hon. Charles Hubbard: I object again, Mr. Chair—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): I note your objection.

Hon. Charles Hubbard: The Liberal who sits in the chair has never taken the Liberal position. We go around the table, and—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): I guarantee you, Charlie, I will never take a Liberal position. Now, I note your complaint and I will carry on using the time allotted to the Conservative Party.

As I said, my concern is that we ensure that you are focusing on the—

Hon. Charles Hubbard: Mr. Chair, I will challenge the chair on your ruling.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Okay. I know *Robert's Rules of Order*. I'll have to check with the clerk on what the procedure is for this.

Mr. Raymond Bonin: On the point of order, Mr. Chair, we don't operate with *Robert's Rules of Order* here. We have another vice-chair. Maybe we can solve this quickly. Ask Madame St-Hilaire to chair while you're making your comments. She's getting the extra \$5,000 a year. We have to put her to work.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Why don't we just satisfy this?

I don't see why you're so concerned about what seat I happen to be sitting in, Charlie, other than that you're obviously a little bent out of shape today anyway. Why don't we just simply ask if—

Hon. Charles Hubbard: I challenge the chair. If we could have a ruling from the committee in terms of your job as chair, Mr. Chair—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): I hear you, Charlie, from the chair, and if you'll shut up for a minute, I will deal with your challenge.

Now, I put it to the members present. Are they concerned that I ask my questions sitting in this chair, or would they have me move over to the chair at the side, and somehow that will magically make everything different?

How many feel that I need to make a—

Mr. Raymond Bonin: I'll respond to that, Mr. Chair.

If you ask me if I have problems with what is happening today, I would say no, but it is not the practice for a chair to have an open

forum, because another time it may be used unreasonably. The practice is that if the chair wishes to get involved with the discussion, the chairperson vacates the chair. That's common under *Robert's Rules of Order* and *Bourinot*.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Okay.

Mr. Raymond Bonin: Let's simplify it. That's why we have two vice-chairs.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Madam St-Hilaire, can you take the chair while I have my round of questioning?

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire): I'm going to speak French, though.

Do you want to ask your questions, Mr. Gouk?

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Gouk: Now if I may, one of the things I wanted to ask you about is where we stand. I've seen some change on prohibited items. We've seen some improvement there, but we are still running air crew through that process, because, as you say, everyone who gets on board the aircraft gets checked. The pilot, for example, once he gets on board, has a four-foot fire axe in the cockpit of his aircraft. So aside from what the captain has, obviously I think there should at least be, at minimum, for air crew, some expedited way through.

But there are so many things on board the aircraft. For example, I don't know if we still do it, but we used to have to break off that five-eighths-of-an-inch-long nail file on clippers. I think that's now accepted, is it, or do you still have to defang your nail clippers?

Mr. Mark Duncan: Only if it has a knife in it.

Mr. Jim Gouk: Okay, but you know the swing-out nail file that's kind of standard? Is it now allowed?

Mr. Mark Duncan: The nail file is now allowed, but not one that has a knife on it.

Mr. Jim Gouk: Okay. I wasn't sure. I thought it was allowed, but I remember at the time when it was done, Air Canada then issued you with a steel fork that had tines longer than the nail file that you broke off.

What is being looked at in terms of further relaxation on some of those exempted items?

• (1000)

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: I know that today or tomorrow Transport Canada representatives are meeting with Kip Hawley, the new director of the Transportation Security Administration, to discuss these issues.

As you know, the prohibited item list is not done by CATSA; we're only implementers. It's done by Transport Canada. But we have voiced our concerns with the prohibited item list. We work closely together. There are things that should be taken off the prohibited item list, for sure.

Mr. Jim Gouk: Okay.

One of the things that you could maybe address, which was raised on the *The Passionate Eye*.... They kind of put the screws to you. That's why I was late this morning, because somebody put a screw to my tire, so I have some sympathy with you.

They did mention that there were staff morale problems, high turnover, job dissatisfaction, and so on. Could you maybe address that issue?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Yes, Madam Chair.

We heard one screener... From August till late October we travelled the country and met 1,600 screeners out of 4,300. The feedback we received is just the opposite. Our people are dedicated to doing a good job. They want more training. They are proud of wearing CATSA's uniform. They are not our employees, but obviously we work closely together.

Yes, I was very disappointed to hear a screener come out and say, "This thing is a joke". It concerns me. What makes CATSA an organization that can improve itself is that we strike back. The day after *the fifth estate* was on TV last Wednesday, we were at our drawing table, looking at how we can improve the system.

That's why, Madam Chairman, when Mr. Gouk tells me he can penetrate the system, knowing who he is, I welcome that. We want to make sure we will improve the system. We're trying to do that on a daily basis.

If I had only one criticism to make about *the fifth estate*, it's that we did not have a chance to see what they had in order to improve the system. I never said the system would be perfect, but I can assure you, though, that we're working on a daily basis to improve the system.

Mr. Gouk, if you know things that you can do to improve the system, please, be my guest. We're looking for that.

Mr. Jim Gouk: I'll talk to you after directly. I have a final comment—

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire): You're time has expired.

Mr. Carrier.

Mr. Jim Gouk: Okay, I'm done.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Carrier (Alfred-Pellan, BQ): Good morning, Mr. Duchesneau. I think that your philosophy concerning airport security is good. I was also struck by your enthusiasm for your position. However, your image in the media has been sullied in my opinion. Some of my constituents told me that since I was working on the transport file, that I should ask some questions about this matter.

Le Journal de Montréal, which is broadly distributed in Quebec, reported that a passenger leaving Toronto International Airport was carrying a cartridge containing 50 metallic balls in his coat and that the cartridge wasn't detected by the security X-ray equipment. He was very surprised when he got home and realized this. That sort of thing is terribly worrying to the public. The same article reported that the minister had appointed investigators. You seem to be the one responsible for this, the culprit.

I'd like to talk about communications. Have you responded publicly to this incident? Could you explain yourself? We didn't get an explanation earlier—and I'm thinking about this particular case—so I'd like to hear you on it.

Do you have a directorate or a communications service which reassures the public, and which is at arm's length to the minister who decides to embark on investigations? Investigators are appointed, but we don't know when we will get information regarding this. We get the feeling that passengers are concerned about it. Their concerns are perhaps unjustified, given everything that you said, but I think it's important that the public know what your response is. I'd like to hear you talk about that.

•(1005)

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Let's talk first about the case you mentioned. I wasn't aware of the article, but you referred to a gentleman who took a flight from Toronto to Montreal carrying a cartridge. This is totally unacceptable, and I have no reasonable excuse to give you. It flies in the face of our procedures, which means that the system failed in this particular instance.

As far as a response from a communications service is concerned, the day after this article appeared, we were working hard to finalize a communications campaign.

Our first reaction—and I think that it was perfectly human—was to tell ourselves that we would never again believe what was written in the newspaper. I'm not talking about what was reported in *Le Journal de Montréal*, but about the report in the program *the fifth estate*, because the statements made in this program were half-baked.

Our other reaction was to put ourselves in the shoes of passengers flying at 35,000 feet and so we chose to inform the public. Over the course of the first three years after CATSA's inception, we mainly worked on managing people's fears. I think that we were successful in this. However, that's no longer enough; we now have to educate the public. The further back in history September 11 is, the more we notice how frustrated passengers are by line-ups and by how thorough searches are. Seeing upset passengers worries me, of course, but I've always said that the best protection available comes from passengers themselves. We saw this on the morning of September 11, when passengers decided to take action. Late last week, a woman came to a checkpoint. She wasn't carrying anything that threatened security, but her behaviour was unusual. The other passengers went and spoke to the airline and said that if this person boarded the aircraft, that they wouldn't get on.

It is in my best interest to ensure that passengers feel safe and become my allies. To achieve this, we will launch a communications campaign in the upcoming weeks or months.

Mr. Robert Carrier: I would like to know if you will respond directly to the incidents reported in the media; are you allowed to? If you are not, you will look bad.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: There was fallout the day after the broadcast and the next day. The minister made a statement and the non-stop media requests have fallen off since. They wanted only to hear from the minister. He took a stand. We even called the journalists, but it was yesterday's news.

In the coming days or weeks, in the lead-up to the holiday season, we'll have an aggressive information campaign called *Fly smart, fly secure*. The aim is also to restore our reputation and our credibility. As I said in my opening remarks, there can be attacks on several levels. If our credibility is impugned, our duty is to reassure our passengers. People must feel that we are trustworthy.

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Thank you.

Mr. Scarpaleggia.

[Translation]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Duchesneau, I too would urge Mr. Gouk to share with you in private what he perceives as the chinks in your armour. On behalf of all Canadians, I urge him to do so.

You mentioned the report aired on *The Passionate Eye*. Actually, it was on *the fifth estate*. You said earlier that in many cases there were no such flaws. Could you give us examples?

•(1010)

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: I have here a transcript of what was said. In reference to the envelope, for instance, it says: "It will be a big black blob." That is not true.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: That's right, we have just seen that.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: That's right. That's only one example. There are many others. In any event, my goal here this morning is not to criticize *the fifth estate* program. I'm only saying that if we had had an opportunity to provide our side of the story, these negative feelings would not be spreading among Canadians.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: The report said that the individual who went through security had traces of explosive on him. It seems that he was not swabbed. Is that true?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: That's right. Those were traces. We have a device that can detect them. This is the swab that you see here. You must realize that the officer doing the search has to decide—37 million times a year—if there are other factors. Mr. Duncan mentioned them earlier. Unexplained wires or batteries by themselves, if they had been found, may have led to a different decision. Whatever the case may be, there are devices at search points that detect that.

[English]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Last March I had the great pleasure to travel to Israel with Mr. Duncan and the minister to examine the Israeli security system at airports, ports, and so on.

My question is for you, Mr. Duchesneau, but if Mr. Duncan would like to answer, that's fine too.

Mr. Duchesneau, you said at the beginning that we share best practices with countries like Israel, for example. Mr. Duncan, since last March, can you tell us what best practices we've adopted from what we saw in Israel?

Mr. Mark Duncan: We visited Israel two years before, when CATSA was actually first set up. I had the opportunity to visit with one of our board members. One of the first things we brought back

from Israel was their approach of a layered system and also their approach of continuous improvement.

One thing we did immediately when we set up CATSA is...our interventions in the security system are at the screening point, at the access points, biometric cards, so all of our SOPs are to work in cooperation with the airport.

One thing we were not able to bring back from Israel is...in Israel they do profiling, by any other name, and they ask a number of questions. The laws of Canada, etc., would not permit us to do that.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: That brings me to another point. When you screen, is everyone screened or is it a random system? It seems to me everyone is screened to the exact same extent so that the system is objective.

You will recall that in the case of the Air India bombing the ticket counter person who took the bag of somebody who looked nervous, who had a one-way ticket or whatever, did not seem to have the authority and there was no procedure for them to alert someone. There was no one to alert in the chain of command.

Do you already check everyone to the maximum extent, or are you allowed to go a little further? We're not talking profiling now; we're simply talking about somebody who looks nervous, or the agent has a hunch, like the border guard in Washington State who intercepted Mr. Ressim. It was an intuitive thing.

•(1015)

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Yes, you're right, we screen 100% of all passengers the same way. But we can do random screening also, and "random for cause". If an alarm is triggered, if we see something we're not satisfied with, the person will go for a secondary screening. We do that on a regular basis.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Thank you, Mr. Scarpaleggia. I let you go a minute over. We'll have plenty of time to go around again.

Madame St-Hilaire.

[Translation]

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, I would like to come back to two points. To follow up on what my colleague Mr. Carrier said, I would like you to tell us a little more about communications. That is unavoidable when we see this type of article. Mr. Carrier was alluding to November 11, when we were told that CATSA had refused to comment. On November 12, CATSA once again refused. CATSA once again refused to comment when contacted by CBC Radio.

You say that you are disappointed in what was reported because you were not there. But you did turn down opportunities to comment when articles or reports were being prepared.

My colleague asked a very relevant question. You have a communications service. You are preparing energetic propaganda, or at the very least, an information campaign, but when the going gets tough, when there is a crisis, you have no comment, and we don't really know why that is. Then the minister says things that may be slightly, if not entirely, inaccurate.

I find it troubling that neither you nor your communications people have given any response. You could say that things are well in hand, and that you will be dealing with it, and tell us what you intend to do. But you just stand on the sidelines, and that is not terribly comforting.

We think that we are safe and that you are doing a wonderful job, but if we happen to read the articles in *Le Journal de Montréal*—and between you and me, quite a few people have read them—then it is not very reassuring. It gives rise to fear and uncertainty.

Someone from your office should tell us what is happening, in order to reassure us and put things in perspective, rather than run away and leave it to the Minister of Transport to respond. That doesn't necessarily make people feel any better.

I acknowledge that my last remark was a partisan one.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: I won't comment on that one.

I hear what you are saying and I understand your concern. That was not our most shining moment and we know that we can do better.

However, *Le Journal de Montréal* said that we did not return the call, and that is false. We did call back.

You have to understand the media culture. When they have a breaking story, they want an answer right away. The minister was making an announcement, and that took precedence. Then, we wanted to set the record straight on something else and we called the reporters back, but for them it was already old news.

Could we have done better? In all honesty, the answer is yes.

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: Okay.

I would like to come back to the gates. I understand your chart. In fact, it would be great if we could have smaller copies.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: I will leave them with you; you can have them for your office.

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: It is your mandate, not mine.

I want to be sure that I understand. About the doors—and I understand that it is not your responsibility, but the airports—I find it rather surprising that no one is in charge of all of this.

You will say that it is the Department of Transport, but we know that is not quite the case.

Should there not be someone or some corporation in charge? Should CATSA not have this responsibility?

I'm surprised that the airport corporations are not responsible for the security of these doors and that nobody has a master key.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Indeed, Mr. Chairman, it is a patchwork. So far, the system has worked well. However, there is always room for improvement.

When we started out, as a new organization, we were considered to be intruders, but we are working more closely with the airports and airlines.

In each airport, there is an AOC, an airline operators committee, where the airlines, the airport, CATSA and customs all work together. These committees are working better all the time.

We are not always happy, and we are in the process of harmonizing our operations. Two or three years ago, we operated in a much more isolated way.

When we appear before a committee like this one and are asked to answer some tough questions, we don't consider that we have finished the job, we are only beginning.

Yesterday, I met with my counterpart from the Canada Border Services Agency. We are scheduled to meet again soon, because we may be able to harmonize a few things. The agency deals with people coming into the country, and we deal with those who are leaving. We can work together.

• (1020)

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Thank you.

Mr. Bonin.

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

[Translation]

My initial reaction is not to believe what I hear on the television news. I've been in politics for 30 years and that reflex has served me well. You can imagine the life we lead. All sorts of accusations are made in the House because we have immunity. The media repeat them and we can't defend ourselves either. There are 89,000 constituents in my riding and I can't meet them all one-on-one. I understand what you are going through. I also worked for 25 years for an airline and when I fly I feel perfectly safe.

[English]

What we are experiencing here is a committee trying to micromanage a department of the government. I drive to Sudbury every week—and I'll be driving today—and I compare this to an OPP following me. It's 500 kilometres, and if an OPP decides to follow me for 100 kilometres, you can be guaranteed he or she will be able to find something to give me a ticket for. The same applies to everybody here.

I have mentioned before, Mr. Chair, and I'll mention again that these meetings should be in camera. I'll tell you why. There are at least two types of people who could—well, now three, because you said you could do it—try to beat the system. Some are very sophisticated; they know everything that was said here today. But there are a lot of people who are mentally ill, and we just gave them a course—not a very good course—on how to try to beat the system. I don't think it's the job of a committee to do that. That's what happens when you try to micromanage.

My next point is to you, Mr. Chair. You're my friend and we get along well, but when a member of Parliament says, "I can beat that system, and I can go through any one of them with a firearm", well, I'm glad I'm driving home. Because if I worked for your department, every time I saw an MP, I would say, "Maybe they got that letter and they're trying to beat the system". I'd put them through the mill, every one of them, including the Prime Minister. We've just challenged them.

This leads me to my last point, which is a question.

With all these experts who are commenting on the way you do your work, how do you maintain your employee morale at a decent level? There's a lot of suggestion here. We always say, "Oh no, we know they're doing a good job", but the criticism we all bring forward makes them appear as a bunch of fools. I know they're not fools. They're decent people, earning a living, trying to do a good job. How can you keep the morale up when television stations show their pictures on TV with a world expert on how to beat the system—well, "world expert" is what they said. And this poor gentleman behind there is caught by a person who thought for days ahead of time about how to beat him. Here's an ordinary person trying to do a job and being shown on TV as having failed.

How do you maintain morale in your employees with that type of micromanagement and poor reporting?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Those are very good questions and comments.

The first comment I will make is that that's the difference between you and me, Mr. Bonin—you, a member of Parliament. I have thin skin; you have thick skin. Yes, I get frustrated when I see and hear things. I'm a fighter, and I like to bounce back. Maybe it's not always perceived the proper way, but I'm telling you, it has nothing to do with the questioning I received today—on the contrary.

As for morale, well, that's the reason we travelled the country and met with the front-line screeners. Would you believe that in Edmonton, for instance, one of our screeners, making \$15 an hour, is the former CEO of all Edmonton hospitals. He took his pension and now he's a screener because he likes to meet people. It's more than obvious that when he sees *the fifth estate* he's not happy. All the people wearing screeners' uniforms are not happy. They react. We sent a message, an internal communication, to our screeners saying, well, be the professionals that we think you are, and I think it was well received.

Personally, I go through screening all the time, and I receive the royal treatment. I'm screened 150% because they just want to make sure they won't miss one standard operating procedure somewhere, and I welcome that. I'm really annoyed when I see passengers treating screeners as if they were second-class citizens. They are there to help them, to protect them, and sometimes they get a rough beating with words, and I cannot accept that.

So, yes, we're trying to keep the morale up, because these people need our support, not disrespect, and your point is right on.

As for the in camera session, I know, Mr. Chairman, that we've come here before and nearly gone to jail because we were not answering the questions, not because we didn't want to. It's because whenever a question is asked we need to find the proper balance to

satisfy you without giving Terrorism 101 to people who are listening. If I have one criticism to make of the *the fifth estate* report, it's that it was Terrorism 101. There are things people don't need to know.

But if we were in an in camera session...I would open all the doors, all the books, because you are a tribunal of Parliament, and we report to Parliament. We're not in the business to hide anything from you.

•(1025)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Thank you, Mr. Bonin.

Just for clarification, I should point out that I never said I was going to take it through a CATSA security point.

Mr. Raymond Bonin: At the airport, you said.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Yes, get it through security but not necessarily through one of their points. It's not a direct challenge.

Mr. Raymond Bonin: I'd still put you through the mill.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): That's fine, but it's not a direct challenge to them.

Mr. Julian.

Mr. Peter Julian: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to come back to the issue of morale, because we know that one of the weaknesses in the American security system around September 11 was the fact that, particularly at Logan Airport, they had privatized security firms that were paying these folks minimum wages. We know when people are getting Wal-Mart wages they have the kind of turnover that Wal-Mart has, which is 100% every year. I know there was a commitment to increase wages for security agents across the country, so I'd like to know what the average salary is now and what the starting salary is for workers who are security agents working on our behalf across the country. How has that changed over the last three years?

I think that's a fundamental point, which I think the Americans certainly have learned. The deregulation/privatization agenda has a huge downside, and in the United States' case it meant people getting through security at Logan Airport with box cutters.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: That's a good question.

Mr. Chair, the average salary is \$15 an hour plus benefits. It ranges from \$14 to \$17. But you know what? For the 1,600 screeners we met, salary was not an issue. It's only an issue when people look down at them and say, oh, you're a \$15-an-hour screening agent. Otherwise, it's not a problem. What they want is respect and support from this management to make sure we support them when they face whatever problems they have.

To support my point that salary is not an issue, we have a very low turnover rate. Compared to the United States, we have a turnover rate of between 5% and 6%, depending on the areas. In certain areas of the country we have a hard time competing with the industry to attract screeners, but we have a turnover rate, as I say, between 5% and 6%—

• (1030)

Mr. Peter Julian: Is that annually?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: It's annually.

Compared to what we see in other countries, when we meet with our counterparts from other countries, in some places the turnover rates are between 25% and 30%. We must be doing something right.

The bottom line is that they're proud, they want more training, and they want to make a difference in the security of this country.

Mr. Peter Julian: What is the starting wage?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: It's \$14.

Mr. Peter Julian: Is it \$14 an hour now?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: It might be \$12.80.

Mr. Mark Duncan: It's \$12.82.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Okay. It's \$12.82. That's why I bring my CEO with me.

Mr. Michael McLaughlin (Vice-President and Chief Financial Officer, Canadian Air Transport Security Authority): The average wage would be about \$15.

Mr. Peter Julian: Is the average wage \$15 now?

Mr. Michael McLaughlin: Yes, it's \$15.

Mr. Peter Julian: What is the percentage of temporary or part-time workers among the overall workforce? What is the probationary period?

Mr. Mark Duncan: Part-time versus full-time, again, varies by airport. As you know, many airports have a morning peak and an evening peak. We contract through the service providers for an hourly basis of screening. We may contract for 1,000 hours of screening. It is the service provider's requirement to work with the employees, and they have a mix of both full-time and part-time employees.

Mr. Peter Julian: Okay. What is that mix? What would be the percentage across the country?

Mr. Mark Duncan: It varies by airport. The percentage is 70% full-time and 30% part-time. As I said, that would again be a rough average across the country, and it would vary depending on the airport.

Mr. Peter Julian: Okay. You do not have temporary workers. The people who are hired, either on a part-time or a full-time basis, go through a probationary period. How long is that? What happens at the end of the probationary period?

Mr. Mark Duncan: All of our employees also go through a multi-level training program. First of all, they're hired. They need to have a security clearance through Transport Canada, and they need to have an airport pass. They go through level one training. They have to pass each of the levels in order to be fully qualified.

They're then retested on a frequent basis for certification at a minimum of two years. At a minimum, they're recertified once every two years.

Mr. Peter Julian: But is there a probationary period?

Mr. Michael McLaughlin: Perhaps I should clarify. The screeners are employees of private companies. They're not employees of CATSA. Any probationary period would be from the company they're employed by.

In order for them to work for CATSA, they must obtain certification. We train them, we give them on-the-job training, and we test them. We then certify them, and they're able to work for CATSA. They need to have been through the training period in order to work for CATSA. During that period of time, as screening officers, they can do tasks ultimately leading up to being fully qualified to do all tasks.

The employer would set any terms and conditions in terms of a probationary period under the terms of their employment. It's not CATSA. We do not establish a probationary period. We work only with certified officers.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Thank you, Mr. Julian.

Mr. Hubbard.

Hon. Charles Hubbard: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In terms of training, I was also going to ask this. What length of time does it normally take to offer and provide training? Where do you do that training across the country?

Mr. Mark Duncan: It's a total of about 184 hours that is spread between classroom training and on-the-job training. We have established eight training centres across Canada, primarily located at our major airports.

At our major airports, they can actually go to a classroom. It's primarily computer-based training, because as you've seen from the images, they need to practice on computers. We have simulation exercises. We have an X-ray tutor, which works like a game that they can practice, and we also have remote training.

For example, in Smithers, we can dial up through the Internet. At one of our broadcast centres in Vancouver, for example, you can receive a course over the Internet, and we can actually have in place up to six airports at a time. One of the advantages of that is consistency across the country in terms of our SOPs.

• (1035)

Hon. Charles Hubbard: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Mr. Scarpaleggia wants to speak.

Hon. Charles Hubbard: I think I have some time left.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): I thought you were concluding your remarks, Charlie.

Go ahead.

Hon. Charles Hubbard: I just wanted to thank our guests for coming.

Secondly, Mr. Chair, I want to thank you for clarifying the original statement you made before this committee. I don't think it was properly received in terms of what I heard. Hopefully, the blues will indicate that members of Parliament are not able to go through your system. I know that when you reflect on what was said, Mr. Chair, it wasn't in the best interests of the confidence most Canadians have in the systems we have set up. I certainly know they are not perfect. They are like many other government organizations, including some of our Correctional Service Canada institutions, where you can get in and sometimes get out. I'm sure they're doing a fairly good job, and I hope most Canadians aren't taken aback by the statement made by the chair.

In challenging that originally, Mr. Gouk, that's the reason I did it. I was bent out of shape this morning, but I don't think it was appropriate at the time.

Francis.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: I ran out of time, and you weren't able to answer my question.

Do you have the ability or the power right now, within the Constitution of Canada, to pull someone out of a line because they look suspicious or nervous? In your opinion, is there a way to set up objective criteria that will prevent any kind of racial profiling, which is unacceptable, and use some objective psychological indicators that a screener could apply, again, on a non-racial basis?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Mr. Chair, we don't have the power to do that. We don't have the power to stop, detain, or arrest people. That's done by the police.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: That wasn't my question.

Can you pull them out for further questioning?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: We're not allowed to question. We're in the business of screening to find objects. If we think a person represents a threat, then we call in the police and they do the questioning.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: If you see somebody who looks nervous, can you call in the police to question them?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: As a citizen, yes. But on what grounds?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: As CATSA.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: As CATSA, the way we stand now, our screeners do not have the expertise to determine that.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Thank you.

To further clarify, as much for the parliamentary secretary as for you, with regard to members of Parliament or anybody else with the ability—I've made it very clear—without using any credentials.... Secondly, the point is that I can, but I don't, because I'm not the kind of person who would do that. Why don't we make sure we focus our resources on those who would? The point is—leading to this preferred traveller, or trusted traveller, or whatever it's going to be called—that we take it one step further to say that if they're people who clearly aren't risks, who maybe could do something but don't because they're not risks, then we focus our assets on those who indeed may present some form of risk.

If I may, there is one thing you may be able to clear up for us—it was asked at a previous meeting. I know it's not your fault or responsibility, but it's a problem, nonetheless, and that is the tables at Ottawa International Airport. I know of no other airport where it's completely disconnected from the security screening. You have to unload and still manage your bags and a big bucket and everything else. I know it was a result of space availability, but is anything being done to address it, or can anything be done to address it?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: I don't have the answer, Mr. Chair. I'll check that. We take your point.

As you know, we don't pay rents to airports, so it's always a problem to get more space. We have very good cooperation from the Ottawa airport. When are you going out west? I hope we will have longer tables by the time you get back to the airport.

• (1040)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): It's not the room there, I don't feel, but rather the way it's disconnected from the screening area.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Okay.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Thank you.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: We'll look into that, Mr. Chair.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Mr. Julian, do you have anything further?

Mr. Carrier.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Carrier: I would like to ask a quick question.

[*English*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Carrier: Last Tuesday, I asked an official of the transportation department about safety and screening standards in Canada and to compare them with what is in place in the United States. I was told the standards were exactly the same. I am not sure of that. Recently, I came back from the United States. They told us to remove our shoes and they put them through X-ray machines. I do not think this is done in Canada or that it is a standard procedure in your agency. So, are screening standards different here and in the US?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Of course, what we do is fashioned after what is done in the United States but we have a made-in-Canada model.

The United States are in an apprehended state of war. For that reason, their searches are more thorough. With our equipment, we can detect objects even inside shoes. Last weekend, we found someone who had altered his shoes. Fortunately, he was not carrying explosives, but gold.

We are on the lookout, but in our view it is not necessary to systematically tell people to remove their shoes. When we do, it's because there are triggers.

Mr. Robert Carrier: As far as you know, are there differences between Canada and the United States? Do they have SOPs and screening methods that you don't have?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: The list of prohibited items is practically the same since we are neighbours. The US has a system similar to ours but also different in many respects.

Other countries—such as Israel—have special challenges.

Mr. Robert Carrier: Thank you.

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Thank you.

Mr. Julian.

[Translation]

Mr. Peter Julian: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

How many security companies are you dealing with in those 89 airports?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: There are 14, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Peter Julian: How long are the contracts?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Most of these contracts will come to an end in March 2007.

Mr. Peter Julian: How will they be renewed?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Work has already started on the request for proposals. It should be posted on MERX at some point during the summer and a decision should be made early in 2007.

Mr. Peter Julian: Very well. How many of these 14 companies are unionized?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: They all are.

M. Peter Julian: They're all unionized?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Yes.

Mr. Peter Julian: Which unions are represented?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: The Steelworkers, Teamsters Canada and the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers.

Mr. Peter Julian: These three unions represent all of the 14 companies?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: There may also be smaller companies with smaller unions. I do not know if commissionaires are unionized. They may constitute an exception. I told you that all companies were unionized but in two or three airports, there is the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires. I don't think they belong to a union.

Mr. Mark Duncan: That's right.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: They may be the exception.

Mr. Peter Julian: Overall, salaries are the same? Very well. You set them?

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Yes.

Mr. Peter Julian: Thank you.

[English]

Mr. Don Bell: I have a question as a result of this point. I'm new on this committee and to this discussion, but, Mr. Chair, when you clarified your comments about your suggestion that you could get past the system and then said later—or certainly I inferred—that you were talking about the organization we have here, and then later you said you didn't say it was CATSA....

Are you saying it isn't through CATSA, that there are other ways you can get through? Are you saying you believe the system...? I go through the airport likely as often as you do and I can't imagine it's possible to get anything such as an offensive weapon past, because they check my luggage for lots of harmless things. I'm just curious. If you have that—and you didn't say it was that.... You were being a little coy, I would suggest. I'm just curious as to whether it's because of your ability as a pilot or having been on the air side that you feel that's where the weakness is.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): No, it's not as a result of my background as a pilot or an air traffic controller or anything else. It's a variety of ways that, as I think was already explained here, are better to be discussed either directly with CATSA or in an in camera meeting.

Mr. Don Bell: Yes, I hope you do that.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): There's just one last thing, arising again out of what has been asked and a concern we had before when one of the contracts was expiring and a new one was coming in, in a variety of places in British Columbia. There was some question as to whether there was going to be a contract with the workers. Why does CATSA not simply have their own staff of people, so there's that ongoing continuity and standardization?

• (1045)

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: That's the direction we got from our board of directors.

On the question of cost, I'd feel better giving that answer in an in camera session.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Okay.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: I don't want to open the debate, but I think the numbers speak for themselves.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Fair enough.

I think a future committee, because I don't think there'll be time before this one again, would like to have that in camera session with you. We appreciate very much your coming here. I know it's a tough battle facing us. I very much agree with the concept that you need to have the security of privacy in an in camera meeting.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Good.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): That's something that I'm sure a future committee will take into consideration.

Mr. Jacques Duchesneau: Thanks a lot, Mr. Chair.

And I'm not mad; I'm passionate.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): There you go, but not a *Passionate Eye*.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): Madam St-Hilaire, did you have a notice of motion you wanted to bring forward, as circulated?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: ...the motion... [*Editor's Note: Inaudible*]

[*English*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Jim Gouk): I think everyone has a copy. We can save that for the beginning of the meeting on Tuesday.

Thank you.

You've been given notice. We'll deal with that then.

Thanks. The meeting is adjourned.

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