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Chair

Mr. Kevin Sorenson

Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC)): Good afternoon, everyone. This is meeting number 35 of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security on Monday, October 25, 2010.

I would remind everyone that today we are being televised, so please take your cellphone or BlackBerry and put it on mute mode or at least silence the ring tone so that it doesn't disrupt the meeting.

Today we're commencing a study on the issues surrounding security at the G-8 and G-20 summits. In our first hour we welcome the Honourable Vic Toews, Minister of Public Safety.

Thank you, Mr. Minister, for taking the time out of your busy schedule to appear on this issue.

We also have as witnesses, from the Privy Council Office, Mr. Ward Elcock, the special advisor, and Marie-Lucie Morin, the national security advisor to the Prime Minister and associate secretary to the cabinet.

From the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, we have Chief Superintendent Alphonse MacNeil, division operation commander to the 2010 G-8 and G-20 integrated security unit.

I understand, Mr. Minister, you have an opening statement that you will share. You have appeared before the committee on many occasions. We thank you for that. You know the process as far as the questions go. We welcome your comments.

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to congratulate you on taking the chair of this committee; it certainly indicates the faith that committee members have in your qualifications and abilities. I don't believe I've had the opportunity to appear in front of you as chair of this committee.

In any event, it's a pleasure to appear before the committee to discuss security costs for the G-8 and G-20 summits.

As you indicated, I am joined here today by very qualified individuals, who will be able to provide the committee with the details for many of the questions they may ask. They are senior officials who were involved with the preparation and provision of the G-8 and G-20 security, and I'm confident they'll be able to answer any questions you might have on the operational details of these summits, including the specific costs.

The Public Safety portfolio had a number of partners that were involved in the security for the G-8 and G-20 summits. Altogether, the Public Safety portfolio received \$790.1 million, which is approximately 85% of the security budget of \$930 million.

Funding to the agencies was as follows: \$507.5 million for the RCMP to conduct planning and operations related to policing and security at the two summits; \$278.3 million for Public Safety to administer the security cost framework policy and reimburse security partners for the incremental and extraordinary security-related costs they incurred; \$3.1 million for the Canadian Security Intelligence Service to provide intelligence support related to threats to the national security of Canada, including the G-8 and G-20 summits; \$1.2 million for the Canada Border Services Agency to support activities associated with the provision of incremental border services and critical program support for the G-8 and G-20 summits.

These important investments were necessary given the scope and magnitude of security operations associated with hosting two major summits back to back, which was unprecedented. I believe all of us can be proud of what we accomplished at the summits themselves.

A wide range of global challenges was addressed at the G-8 summit, including international peace and security, environmental sustainability and green recovery, as well as the global economic recovery. It also resulted in member nations agreeing to the Muskoka initiative, which will result in an increase in spending of \$7.3 billion on maternal, newborn, and child health.

In Toronto, Canada hosted the first summit of the G-20 in its new capacity as the premier forum for international economic cooperation. Some of the many areas of advancement of this summit included taking steps to safeguard and strengthen the economic recovery; laying the foundation for strong, sustainable, and balanced growth globally; financial sector reform; as well as promoting trade and investment. This represents significant steps to support the implementation of a common vision at the international level through the alignment of economic actions and decisions by G-20 countries.

Member nations accomplished a great deal at both summits. I think it goes without saying that Canada can be proud of hosting such a massive undertaking when the eyes of the world were upon us.

In order for these summits to unfold in an orderly fashion, an enormous and complex logistic and security operation was required. While this cost was higher than any of us would have liked, it was necessary.

Leading the design and delivery of the security was the RCMP-led Integrated Security Unit. The security plan involved 10 federal government agencies and departments, including the RCMP, Public Safety Canada, the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces, Health Canada, Transport Canada, the Canada Border Services Agency, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, or CSIS, Industry Canada, as well as several provincial and municipal police forces.

• (1535)

In order to put the magnitude of the summits and the related security operation into perspective, I would like to share some numbers with the committee. An integrated security unit led by the RCMP was struck and established to coordinate the provision of security. Included in the ISU were representatives from the Ontario Provincial Police, the Toronto Police Service, Peel Regional Police, and the Department of National Defence. There were more than 20,000 police officers and military personnel deployed to the unified command centres as well as in and around the two summit sites to ensure security for the internationally protected persons and their delegations. It is important to note that there were more delegates at these summits than there were athletes at the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in Vancouver.

Such a large security operation comes at a cost. Not only are large numbers of personnel required, but they must also have accommodations and the equipment necessary to perform their duties as well as manage logistics during the time of their deployment. This was confirmed by the Auditor General, who noted the following:

Obviously \$1 billion is a lot of money, but I think we have to recognize that security is expensive. There are a lot of people involved over a long period of time. We may think that the meetings only last for a few days, but all the preparations involve extensive planning, extensive coordination for months before, and I think we have to be really, really careful.

Security is an expensive but non-negotiable endeavour. The responsibility for hosting these events includes the provision of the appropriate level of security. Not only does Canada have a moral obligation to protect the participants in these summits, but we also have an international obligation to do so under a United Nations convention adopted in 1973 to protect internationally protected persons. Further to this, the Foreign Missions and International Organizations Act and the Criminal Code of Canada require that security be provided for internationally protected persons.

As a government, we also have a responsibility to be open and transparent about the cost, which is what we are doing. The government has been transparent about the total security budget from the onset. This observation has been confirmed by the Parliamentary Budget Officer in his assessment of the planned security costs for the G-8 and G-20 summits released in June. He indicated in his report that compared to other countries, Canada has been more transparent on the cost of security related to the summits. As you may be aware, the Auditor General is presently examining the security costs for the summits and is receiving full cooperation in the review. This, Mr. Chair, certainly has been my intent from the

beginning. I've stated from the beginning that our books are open to the Auditor General for her review.

At this time, members of the Public Safety portfolio as well as security partners involved with the security for the summits are currently in the process of compiling and reconciling all security expenses incurred as a result of the summits. Due to the audit and financial control mechanisms and the security cost framework policy, the final security costs may not be known for a number of months. This is the case because the policy reimburses security partners for reasonable and justifiable incremental costs incurred. Once the security partners submit their final financial claims for reimbursement, an independent audit will be conducted to ensure that only eligible costs are reimbursed. All claims for reimbursement are to be submitted to Public Safety by December 1, 2010. Once these claims are received, the final audits will commence, with the intent to have the process completed by March 31 of next year.

Mr. Chair, I have committed to providing full disclosure of the G-8 and G-20 summits security costs in the past, and I am reaffirming this statement today. The government is accountable to the Canadian public and is committed to managing financial resources in a fiscally responsible manner. I can assure the committee that the government will respond to all questions posed on the security budget and costs, and it will deliver a full financial report on actual costs incurred once it is available.

• (1540)

Thank you. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have or else defer those questions to members of this panel who are more qualified to answer these specifics than I may be.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Minister.

We'll move to the first round of questions.

This is a seven-minute round, and we'll start with Mr. Holland.

Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the minister for appearing before committee today, and to the other witnesses.

Minister, you don't get to the most expensive weekend of meetings in history without a lot of bad management. I want to go through an anatomy of how things got so bad with you.

First, when the initial decision was made to try to shoehorn this into the riding of Tony Clement, a cabinet minister in your government, and you tried to shoehorn it in there and it wouldn't fit, the decision was then made to split it into two venues, even after Minister Clement talked about how much money would be saved by having it in one venue. It was dumped into Toronto at the last minute.

Then, instead of listening to most of the advice at the time to put it on the CNE grounds or in an area that was easy to secure and much less costly, it was put in downtown Toronto, in the financial district.

Minister, when you made the decision to shove the rest of this into downtown Toronto, on whose advice did you do it? Who did you talk to? Did you incorporate any of that advice into what you did, and if you did, can you be specific in terms of who you spoke to and what advice they were giving?

Hon. Vic Toews: Thank you, Mr. Holland.

I believe Mr. Elcock can answer that question in detail.

Mr. Mark Holland: Well, Minister, if you're capable, I'd like to hear what advice you got.

Hon. Vic Toews: And I'm going to provide you with the advice right from the horse's mouth, Mr. Holland, so perhaps Mr. Elcock can speak.

Mr. Mark Holland: Okay. If your answer is Mr. Elcock, was there anybody else other than Mr. Elcock who—

Hon. Vic Toews: I'd like Mr. Elcock to have an opportunity to answer the baseless charges that you've made.

Mr. Elcock.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Elcock.

Mr. Ward Elcock (Special Advisor, Privy Council Office): Mr. Chairman, the decision was made to not hold both meetings in Deerhurst simply because, at the end of day, Deerhurst was too small to host a G-8 meeting. Given the size of the meeting, it was beyond the capacity of the venue.

Mr. Mark Holland: If I may, Mr. Chair, I'll come back to Mr. Elcock. We have the minister for only an hour. We're going to have the officials for the second hour. If the minister doesn't want to answer a question in the time he has allotted to him, we can come back to the officials in the second hour.

Minister, when you made the decision to put this in downtown Toronto—

Hon. Vic Toews: Well, that's not—

Mr. Mark Holland: —you specifically—

Hon. Vic Toews: Wait.

Mr. Mark Holland: Mr. Chair, I'm just asking—

Hon. Vic Toews: I want to appeal to you, Mr. Chair, that the question that has been put will be answered by the individual who's most competent to answer it, in the sense that this individual has all of the facts.

I'm not going to get into a discussion with Mr. Holland, who simply wants to fight and make baseless accusations. He obviously doesn't want to hear the truth in this matter. This is typical of Mr. Holland's approach.

I would suggest that if Mr. Holland is truly interested in hearing from the experts on why the decision was made, Mr. Elcock is here.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

I would remind all members that we have had the opening statement from our minister and that he has brought the top advisors—whether national security, RCMP, or special advisors—specifically to answer questions. At every meeting I've been at with ministers, they have the ability to put the question to the individual who can best answer it.

Continue, Mr. Holland.

Mr. Mark Holland: Mr. Chair, hopefully you paused the time there.

• (1545)

The Chair: We did, yes.

Mr. Mark Holland: Look, Minister, you're here for an hour, and it's my intent to get at the rationale behind your decision-making. Of course, the rest of the witnesses will be here for an additional hour, and it's our intention to certainly pose questions to them. If there's a question that you feel you don't have an answer to and you want to put it to your officials, then let's just move on and we'll ask that question later.

Let me just ask this to you directly in terms of a personal opinion. Do you not feel that all of this was entirely predictable, that by shoving it in downtown Toronto in the financial district—not listening to the City of Toronto, not listening to police—it was entirely predictable that a lot of the chaos and confusion and problems that flowed out of that decision would come?

I'm asking this of you personally. When you think about it now, in retrospect, was it not a bad decision to put this in downtown Toronto, in the financial district?

Hon. Vic Toews: Perhaps I can have Mr. Elcock answer as to why those were the recommendations that were made with the government and why the government in fact agreed with Mr. Elcock's assessment of the situation.

Perhaps Mr. Elcock can—

Mr. Mark Holland: I'll come back to Mr. Elcock in the second hour on that question.

Minister, let me go to the issue of cost. You said in the House that “we...wait for the bills to come in before we determine what the costs are”.

It's now been four months—four months—and we don't know the details of all this spending. We know about \$200 million; we had to pry it out with an order paper question. We know about glow sticks and in-suite snacks and millions and millions of dollars on a wide array of things that seemed dubious, including lake creation and lake elimination. But what we don't have now, even four months later, are those bills.

I'm sorry, I don't accept this rationale you're giving me—unless you're telling me that you hand out blank cheques. How could you not know what the bills are? I mean, if you're telling me that you wait for contractors to come and tell you what reasonable costs are four months after the fact, how long do you wait, Minister, before you get the details on how much this thing cost? Why is it now four months and we still don't have about \$1 billion in specific details?

Hon. Vic Toews: Mr. Holland, you may come from a background where you pay bills before the facts are presented to you; this government does not. This government waits until we receive the bills before we actually pay the bills and announce what the costs are.

We understand what the general budget is of the security—I've made those figures available—but we don't pay bills until the contractor has demonstrated that he has provided the services and the details justifying the bill.

Mr. Mark Holland: Yes, but Minister—

Hon. Vic Toews: No, let me finish, Mr. Holland. You've gone on for some time.

Mr. Mark Holland: You're missing my point, and I only have about a minute left.

Hon. Vic Toews: So we have said that all contractors will submit their bills by December 1 of this year. At that point, all of those bills will be examined to ensure that the services claimed for have been provided...and that will be done. This will then be audited, and it will also be audited by the Auditor General.

If you submit that we should just pay what we think the service is

Mr. Mark Holland: No, let me be clear, because—

Hon. Vic Toews: No, that's what you said.

Mr. Mark Holland: No, you're putting words in my mouth.

Hon. Vic Toews: You have said—

The Chair: Would you both please go through the chair?

Mr. Mark Holland: Let me put it to you this way, Minister, because you're misunderstanding this.

Hon. Vic Toews: No, let me finish.

The Chair: Mr. Holland, I'll give you the time to come back on this.

Continue, Mr. Toews.

Mr. Mark Holland: Okay, because you're misunderstanding this.

Hon. Vic Toews: You have indicated that we should be paying the bills before they arrive. I disagree.

Mr. Mark Holland: No, let me be clear, and maybe this will help. If I hire somebody to do a job, they tell me how much that job is going to be. Before I enter into a contract I know its cost. But you don't say, "Do the work and come back with whatever the reasonable costs are, and we'll fill in the blank cheque later on."

So I'm saying to you that when you engaged all those different contracts you knew what the costs were supposed to be, and you entered into some assurance that the costs would be lower to a certain value, with a contingency. You could pay those later if you liked, but why on earth could you not submit today—or four months ago when the excuse of security disappeared—the estimate of those costs? Surely you've built in some kind of contingency. Surely you got some kind of assurance of what those costs would be and could provide them.

The notion that you just don't know because you have to wait for those bills to come in to find out what the dollar figure is—to be

frank, if that's how you do business, no wonder you have the biggest deficit in Canadian history.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Holland.

Hon. Vic Toews: On what you're proposing, let's use your example of a contract. The contractor comes to you and says, "I'm going to do a driveway for you in a house that you're building, and that bill will be \$30,000", let's assume, more or less. You are saying to just pay the \$30,000 before you even see the driveway, whether it's done or not. That's not the way we do business. The service has to be provided before we can confirm whether or not we're actually going to pay the money.

So you and I see our business responsibilities differently. I would not consent to the payment prior to the officials being satisfied that the service has actually been provided, but you would.

•(1550)

Mr. Mark Holland: But you'd certainly know what the contract cost was.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister Toews.

Madame Mourani.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Minister, ladies and gentlemen, good day.

I would like to start by addressing an issue other than costs, that of human rights. I would like to give you a quick picture of the situation, Minister. Over 1,000 people, approximately, were arrested during protests related to the G20 Summit. According to estimates 800 of them were released without charges. The majority of those that were charged were cleared of their charges. On October 14, 2010, the Civil Liberties Union issued a report indicating that approximately 6 people were convicted and 40 to 100 people are still waiting for a court decision.

I should also say that I have met with people. Some sent me their statements by email. The following facts were reported to me. The police used insulting, racist, heinous, homophobic and sexist comments. They referred to protesters as terrorists, criminals come to destroy the city and "French shits." There are also allegations according to which the following was said to homosexuals: "You're fucking disgusting."

Journalists were singled out. Some were incarcerated, others beaten. There have been reports of strip-searching, intimidation, humiliation, hunger, fear, cold, of people being treated like rats and of women having their pills taken away from them. People with diabetes were not given access to their drugs and men were vaccinated without their consent, not knowing what was being injected into them. There was the issue of sanitary napkins. Women who had their pills taken away from them were all getting their period. Sanitary napkins and toilet paper were being rationed, people were sleeping in the cold, crammed into cages. There were between 15 and 30 people there.

There were reports of people who had to wait close to 24 hours before having the right to counsel and access to a phone. These people experienced fear and were traumatized. Many young people between the ages of 20 and 25, even one minor, ended up in one of your famous cages. There are reports of naked strip-searches, sometimes four times on the same person. These searches were done before an open doorway. Men could therefore see everything. Apparently, there are also chemical toilets in the famous cells where people were relieving themselves in front of everyone. Sexist comments were made against women, which I found absolutely unacceptable.

I will close by mentioning Ms. Amy Miller, a journalist I had a discussion with this morning. She told me that she was off on her bike heading towards the interim detention centre, where there was going to be a small protest calling for all of these people to be freed. She was arrested on the way because she was filming a group of young people being stopped by the police. She had her media badge on, identified herself and she was told that when they were “done with her”, she would no longer even want to work as a journalist. She was told that they would have a lot of “fun with her” and that she would never want to come to Toronto again. She was told “We are going to have fun with you”. And that they knew what Montreal women were like. One of the women she met in the famous cage she was in for several hours told her that while she was strip-searched, a finger had been introduced into her vagina.

That said, Minister, given that you are responsible, as Minister for Public Safety, I would like to know whether you are going to apologize to all of these people who experienced such abuses of their fundamental human rights, here, on Canadian territory, in Toronto.

• (1555)

[English]

The Chair: I have a comment before you begin, Mr. Minister,

One of the things we have to be very cautious about, whether it's in a quote or just being used, is that we use the right kind of language. So if there's a quote that includes a vulgarity that shouldn't be used in the House, it shouldn't be used here. I'll just remind you of that for the future.

Go ahead, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Vic Toews: Thank you very much. I certainly listened with interest to the comments.

There are a number of agencies responsible for ensuring that police conduct themselves appropriately. If there are any individual Canadians, or indeed any foreign attendees, who were at the G-8 and G-20 summits and who have specific issues and wish to complain about police conduct, I would encourage them to bring those complaints to the appropriate authorities. However, I do not get involved in the policing issues. There are appropriate civilian and other agencies that review police conduct. And, of course, most of all there are the courts that have the oversight of this.

So without accepting the validity of any of the comments that were made, but not discounting them either, I would suggest that the member advise these individuals who have made the complaints to take those complaints to the appropriate authorities where they can

be dealt with in a non-political fashion and in accordance with the law.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: If I understand correctly, Minister, you do not want to apologize for the abuses committed by law enforcement under your command. You are saying that complaints can be brought. People are already doing that, have no fear.

Are you going to be undertaking a public investigation to shed light on what happened in this affair, this total waste of one billion dollars? I am not discussing the money invested into this circus, but rather the human rights violations committed there.

I would also like to inform you of the fact that the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights is seriously going to look into this matter and they will certainly have some questions to ask you, to which you will have to respond.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Minister, if you want to respond, please go ahead.

Hon. Vic Toews: Thank you.

I would certainly encourage the people who made these allegations to bring them to the appropriate authorities. There are independent bodies as well as courts that make these types of determinations, and I would suggest that they are the appropriate venues for these types of accusations to be dealt with in an appropriate manner.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Minister.

We'll move to Mr. Davies.

Mr. Davies, you have seven minutes.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Minister, last week, on October 20, during question period I, along with my colleague from the Bloc, asked you questions in the House of Commons about the allegations of CSIS director Richard Fadden that there were politicians in the country who were under the influence of foreign governments. You responded to these questions as follows:

Mr. Speaker, I will be at the committee on Monday.

The Chair: A point of order, Mr. Davies.

Mr. Don Davies: You said:

Mr. Speaker, I will be there on Monday. The member can ask me any question that she likes.

The Chair: Mr. Davies, I remind you again that today we aren't here on the estimates; we aren't here specific to CSIS; and we aren't here on Mr. Fadden. We are here on the G-8 and G-20. So we expect that the question being asked will have relevance to the issue on which we have invited the minister and his colleagues at the desk. If you don't have a question on that, we'll move to the next.

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Chairman, don't worry. I have lots of questions on the G-20. The minister himself said he would be here and the member could ask any question she likes. So it's up to the minister. He said that in the House. Maybe the minister could speak for himself.

The Chair: On a point of order, Mr. Rathgeber.

Mr. Brent Rathgeber (Edmonton—St. Albert, CPC): The agenda is quite clear. We're here to conduct a study of the G-20 issues surrounding security. Mr. Davies is going off on questions that could be handled in other matters if he's unsatisfied with the answers he's received. This is not the forum. I'm asking, Mr. Chair, that we stick to the agenda.

• (1600)

The Chair: I'm not even going to take that as a point of order. I've made a decision on this one. We'll just continue with the questions specific to the.... If you are asking about CSIS' responsibility, if any, in the G-8 and G-20, I'll accept the question. But if not, we'll proceed to the next.

Mr. Mark Holland: On that point of order, very quickly, the solution is very simple: Minister, come before this committee. There is absolutely no reason.... Do it, Minister. You owe it to this committee.

The Chair: I didn't take it as a point of order. That's debate. We're now on debate.

Mr. Davies, continue, please.

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Chairman, I just hope my time wasn't being taken for all those interjections.

The Chair: Yes, it was.

Mr. Don Davies: A little fairness, Mr. Chairman, would be nice.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Mr. Chairman, I have a point of order.

[English]

The Chair: My ruling came out of your time. Mr. Rathgeber's and Mr. Holland's interjections did not. So continue.

On a point of order.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Mr. Chairman, point of order.

On October 20, 2010, the Minister of Public Safety said, and it is written in the verbatim report, that he would come before us to respond to all of our questions. He has refused to come to this room and take the time to discuss the matter with us. You are now telling us that...

[English]

The Chair: Madam Mourani, we've already been through this. In fact, if you recall from our last meeting, we've made an ability to deal with that at a later time.

I think we'll just proceed with Mr. Davies.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: The minister has therefore been forbidden untruthful. Very well, I understand.

[English]

Mr. Don Davies: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll proceed with this in the House with the minister on a different date.

Mr. Minister, I read this statement. There's not one word in this statement about the mass arrests or the widespread violations of civil

liberties or the illegal searches or the unlawful arrests. This is the largest mass arrest in Canadian history. I'm a little surprised and disappointed with that.

I'm going to ask you pointedly and directly who was responsible for the decision to arrest some 900 innocent Canadians?

Hon. Vic Toews: I don't know anything about the guilt or innocence of people. That's not my task to make that determination.

I know it's typical of the NDP to ask political people to get involved in police operations. I don't do that, and it would be inappropriate for me to do that. You know that. To politicize what is essentially a police operation is entirely inappropriate.

You can ask all the various police departments that have the lawful authority to make those decisions, but as a politician, even as a minister, I do not have that authority. It would be highly inappropriate for me to intervene in a political way in the independence of any policing agency.

As I've indicated—

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Minister, excuse me, I have limited time here.

Hon. Vic Toews: No, wait.

Mr. Don Davies: You're not going to filibuster the question. After all, you've already been ducking on Mr. Fadden—

Hon. Vic Toews: I'm not filibustering. Let me just finish.

There are agencies—

Mr. Don Davies: It was a simple question: who was responsible?

Hon. Vic Toews: Then let me give you a simple answer. There are agencies who make the determination as to whether or not there was any inappropriate conduct by any of the police officers involved, and that—

Mr. Don Davies: Okay, I've heard that, Mr. Minister.

You started out by saying you didn't know about the guilt or innocence. There were 1,105 people arrested; there were 900 people who were ultimately cleared without charge. That means they were not even arrested. They are innocent, Mr. Minister. The people who arrested them ended up dropping the charges when they went back to —

Hon. Vic Toews: I'm sorry, I don't follow that. You said they weren't arrested.

Mr. Don Davies: There were 900 people who were arrested and charged and those charges were dropped. That's 900 people out of 1,100. That's almost 90% of Canadians who were arrested when...at first appearance the state had so little evidence they actually didn't proceed with the charges.

Are you comfortable with that?

Hon. Vic Toews: Let me put it this way. I hope you put this question to the responsible police agencies and the crown attorneys who make that decision. As you know, those are provincial crown attorneys under the jurisdiction of the provincial Ontario Attorney General. I assume you're putting those questions to that individual.

Mr. Don Davies: So it's the province's fault and the police departments that are the issue.

Hon. Vic Toews: I'm just indicating that I do not exercise authority in areas where I have no authority, and you would be the first to be critical if I did.

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Minister, there were 20,000 security personnel within a 20-block radius in Toronto. There was a small group of agitators who ran amok, breaking store windows, torching police cars, for 30 minutes, without any interruption by a police officer.

I imagine you've checked into that. What can you tell us about how and why that occurred?

Hon. Vic Toews: I can leave it to either the RCMP officer here or the security advisors to do that.

I do not get involved in the determination of the guilt or innocence of individuals on our streets who are demonstrating lawfully or otherwise.

•(1605)

Mr. Don Davies: I wasn't asking anything about guilt or innocence; I was asking about the conduct of police.

You're responsible for the RCMP, are you not, sir?

Hon. Vic Toews: I do not involve—

Mr. Don Davies: Are you responsible for the RCMP or not?

Hon. Vic Toews: Let me answer that. I am not responsible for the operational decisions of the RCMP or any other police department.

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Minister—

Hon. Vic Toews: Let me finish.

I am not responsible for the operational decisions of any police force. They respond to either police agencies, independent civilian agencies, or the courts.

I will not—

Mr. Don Davies: Who do the RCMP report to, sir? Do they not report to you?

Hon. Vic Toews: The commissioner reports to me, but he does not report on operational matters.

What you're asking me to do is essentially unlearning the lesson we learned at the Hughes inquiry.

Do you recall the Hughes inquiry and the APEC—

Mr. Don Davies: Of course I do.

Hon. Vic Toews: When the Liberals involved themselves in RCMP operations at a demonstration? That is highly inappropriate, Mr. Davies, and you know it.

Mr. Don Davies: I'm asking if it's concerning to you that people right in the middle of Toronto were arrested by police for no—

The Chair: Mr. Davies, your time is up. In fact, you have more time than what—we'll proceed to the government side.

Mr. MacKenzie.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC): Thank you to the panel that are here today.

One of the difficulties is that a number of people like to talk rather than listen. Minister, I think in your opening address you indicated there are reasons why the final costs aren't known. As I read from your opening address, it says, "Once the security partners submit their final financial claim for reimbursement, an independent audit will be conducted to ensure that only eligible costs are reimbursed."

That would seem logical to most Canadians. But obviously my friend across the table thinks you should either guess at that or simply send a blank cheque and let them fill it in. That is the case. We're still waiting for some of those security partners.

Hon. Vic Toews: That's correct. The security partners deliver their bills to us. The last date, as I understand it, is December 1 of this year. The auditing process will then occur to ensure the services claimed for have been delivered. Those will not only be audited by government officials but the Auditor General. And I welcome the Auditor General's review of our process in this particular case.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: And who might some of those security partners be that we would anticipate may very well submit invoices, if you will, to the government?

Hon. Vic Toews: It can be anything from the Ontario Provincial Police, the Toronto Police Service, the Peel Regional Police. So all these individual organizations will calculate all their expenses, put forward the necessary documents to prove that claim, and then forward them to the responsible individuals in Public Safety.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: My understanding was that there were about 20,000 security people involved, so it will be fairly broad in those organizations assembling their numbers. Is that a reasonable expectation?

Hon. Vic Toews: I think you've hit the nail right on the head. It's not simply one contract we're dealing with here, one simple provision of services. Even within one organization, that organization could provide various types of services, not only the police services that were involved but also the private contractors who did work on behalf of the summit.

I'm wondering, Mr. Elcock, can you make any additional comments in that respect?

Mr. Ward Elcock: No, Mr. Chairman. I think at this stage some numbers have come in, but the reality is we do not have final numbers, and we will not have final numbers until the costs from Ontario, Toronto, and Peel Regional are finally in and audited.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Certainly over the last few months, we've heard, I would say, wild and crazy numbers come out of the official opposition, particularly on some of these things. One of the things I believe we've heard them talk about...and perhaps the RCMP officer can tell us about what they deemed the draining of a quarry for multi-million dollars. My understanding is this facility might not quite be as they have indicated. It was in the Orillia area.

•(1610)

Chief Superintendent Alphonse MacNeil (Division Operations Commander 2010 on the G8 and G20, Integrated Security Unit, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): Yes. The quarry you're referring to is where we built what we called a temporary accommodation facility for the police officers who stayed in the Huntsville area to police the G-8. The Huntsville area did not have adequate accommodation available. It required building a facility, and basically it was a very large trailer park that would house 4,500 police officers.

The quarry itself was one of the only areas—we searched the whole area looking for a suitable spot. We found two locations that were potentially good for that size of an operation. There may be a bit of a misconception. I've heard it reported that we drained the lake or that there was water already there. That's not the case. Studies had been done on the site previously, but when we started to prepare the site—we'd been digging to prepare the ground for the trailers—an underground spring came up through the digging and we had to drain that spring toward a lake that was there. So we put in culverts. And the cost you're referring to, sir, is the cost of putting in the culverts and redirecting the water from the underground spring to a lake that already existed in the quarry.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Would you have an idea of what that cost was? I believe we heard from the opposition that it was in the millions. I believe I saw something somewhere indicating that it was something like \$134,000?

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: It was \$144,000.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: That's a long way from \$2 million.

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: Yes.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: When we talk about costs, Minister, I think we heard about inflation, and trying to make it frivolous—glow sticks. In fact, glow sticks have an important use by the police in communities like the one where these were hosted. Perhaps the RCMP officer can tell us a little bit about what the real need for the glow sticks is.

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: If I may, I was remiss in not thanking the committee in my first response for the opportunity to be here this afternoon. I appreciate the opportunity to clear up some of these questions.

The glow sticks weren't used, actually, by the police. They were used by the Canadian Forces. They have a specific operational purpose. I checked with my colleagues at the Canadian Forces before I came in to ask if it was appropriate to speak about it. It's a very simple answer. They have about an eight-hour shelf life, so you have to replace them three times a day. They use them for marking equipment at night. They are for dangerous areas you are travelling through or if you are doing foot patrols at night and there is a hole or something you have to be conscious of. It is really for the safety of the Canadian Forces members. That's what they were for. They were for marking equipment, such as generators and any kind of outfit we had set up in a wooded area. As you know, the majority of the work of the Canadian Forces was done in heavily wooded areas in the Huntsville area.

The RCMP itself only purchased \$350 worth of glow sticks, and that was for an operational requirement that I really can't discuss.

The Chair: Thank you.

We will now start the second round. I remind you that these are five-minute rounds.

We'll go to Mr. Kania.

Mr. Andrew Kania (Brampton West, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Minister, for being here today.

Minister, in your opening remarks today you indicated, "Once these claims are received, the final audits will commence with the intent to have the process completed by March 31, 2011." Then you indicate that you "will respond to all questions posed on the security budget and costs and will deliver a full financial report on actual costs incurred once available".

I'm taking you at your word that you want to provide full disclosure to the committee. I'm asking you now for your commitment to come back, once all this information is available, for a full two-hour session before the committee to justify these.

Hon. Vic Toews: What I said, in fact—the sentence is right in front of you, and you didn't quote exactly what it said—is this: "I can assure this committee that this government will respond to all questions". If it's necessary for the minister to be there to deal with those types of details, then the committee will make that determination. I won't make any commitment at this point.

Mr. Andrew Kania: Thank you.

Minister, I understand that you have a lot of persons you rely upon for advice. But you will agree with me that decisions in terms of what is going to be spent—taxpayers' money—and where summits are going to be held are political decisions that at the end of the day are made by members of Parliament, and more specifically, by the government and the minister. It is not for the advisors to make these decisions; it is for the government to make these decisions, correct?

•(1615)

Hon. Vic Toews: The government relies on experts to make determinations. Ultimately, determinations are made on the recommendations of these individuals.

Mr. Andrew Kania: Of course. I agree that you have to take into account the recommendations of persons and experts. But at the end of the day, it's your decision. It's the government's decision. They are not elected, and they don't control taxpayers' money; you do. So it's your decision, correct?

Hon. Vic Toews: Ultimately, the government is responsible for the expenditures based on the decisions that were made.

Mr. Andrew Kania: Thank you.

I would like to know why the government, based on all of the recommendations it received, decided to split the G-8 and G-20 summits between Huntsville and Toronto rather than hold it in one location. What was the thought process?

Hon. Vic Toews: In this case I can advise you that we followed exactly the advice of the experts we retained. Mr. Elcock can provide you with exactly the reasons we did that.

Mr. Andrew Kania: Are you telling me that you essentially were told what to do by the experts? I'm asking you why you decided to agree with their decision? By what thought process did you decide that this was right or wrong, and why did you agree and make this decision?

Hon. Vic Toews: Because Mr. Elcock made a convincing argument that these recommendations should be followed, and that's the basis on which we made the final decision.

Mr. Andrew Kania: Based on your memory, what's the convincing argument that you, as the responsible minister, and the government decided to accept to come to this decision? Why did you make this decision?

Hon. Vic Toews: I don't have those notes before me, but what I can assure you is that the recommendations that were made by Mr. Elcock and others were exactly the reasons that we followed in making the determination. I can have Mr. Elcock repeat, for your edification, the reasons that were given.

Mr. Andrew Kania: We can do that later. Thank you, Minister.

As we sit here today, what you're telling me then is that you cannot recall what the recommendations were that led you to make the decision to split the summits between Huntsville and Toronto. Is that accurate?

Hon. Vic Toews: I can tell you that I was the minister in January of this year.

Mr. Andrew Kania: Fine. On behalf of the government, since you represent the government, can you tell us, do you remember what the reason is that the government decided to follow whatever the recommendations were to split the summits between Huntsville and Toronto?

Hon. Vic Toews: Yes, I can advise you that we followed Mr. Elcock's advice. He can provide you with those answers. I don't have those here before me today.

Mr. Andrew Kania: Okay, that's fine. So as we sit here today, you actually personally cannot answer the question as to why the government made the decision to split the summits between Huntsville and Toronto.

Hon. Vic Toews: I can advise you that they appeared to be the most reasonable and compelling arguments that we heard.

Mr. Andrew Kania: Why do you say that? What's the specific recommendation or recommendations that you can tell us the government received, as you can recall today, that led you to the conclusion that it was the most reasonable course of action?

The Chair: Mr. Kania, just on that point, Mr. Elcock is here. Minister Toews has already suggested that we could hear from Mr. Elcock if you're willing to listen to the special advisor answer that question.

Mr. Andrew Kania: Could I have some time now, please?

The Chair: Would you want Mr. Elcock to answer?

Mr. Andrew Kania: No, I'm asking the minister.

The Chair: Okay. Continue.

Mr. Andrew Kania: Thank you.

Hon. Vic Toews: I'll defer to Mr. Elcock in terms of providing those reasons. I believe he has them. He's prepared to provide those for you.

Mr. Andrew Kania: I understand that, Minister, and I think you—

Hon. Vic Toews: All I can say is this. I don't recall disagreeing with Mr. Elcock in respect of any of the recommendations he made in respect of location, insofar as I was involved in any of those decisions.

The Chair: Very quickly, Mr. Kania.

Mr. Andrew Kania: There's a second one. We have the splitting of the summits; we also have the CNE.

I understand, Minister, there was a recommendation that the summit be held for the Toronto portion at the CNE as opposed to downtown Toronto, and it would have been less expensive and it would have had less impact upon the city of Toronto.

I'm going to ask you one question more, but I'd also like to know why that did not happen, and I'm going to ask you to provide copies of all documentation that you say you as a government relied upon to make all of these decisions. You keep relying upon the experts. We should be able to read what the experts said.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kania.

Hon. Vic Toews: All I can say is that I do not recall Mr. Elcock making that recommendation. Alternative locations were discussed, and no recommendation was made in respect of proceeding in those alternative locations. The locations that were recommended were in fact the ones the government ultimately accepted.

There were various arguments—and I do recall this—made about various locations. The experts advised us for a number of reasons—and in quite a lengthy briefing—about why this would be the most appropriate location. That's all I can tell you.

● (1620)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

We'll go back to Mr. MacKenzie. We're a minute over already—one minute and 10 seconds.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Just one moment.

Mr. Kania, on a point of order.

I hope it's a point of order, Mr. Kania.

Mr. Andrew Kania: The minister didn't answer the second part. I asked about the production of all relevant documentation.

The Chair: We're a minute and a half over, and that's perhaps why he didn't answer the question. We'll get those....

Mr. MacKenzie.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Thank you, Chair.

I listened to my friend trying to find out why somebody would do something. I have a press release from the Liberal Party of Canada that says, “The Liberal Party of Canada is calling for answers after receiving information that the Harper government spent \$27.5 million of taxpayer money on a temporary police command centre for last summer’s 72-hour G8/G20 summits.” This was talking about the summit at Bracebridge. In another place I’d like to have the person who did this come and tell us where they came up with those numbers.

Chief Superintendent, I think I did read something in which you had clarified some of those costs associated with the command centre. In fact, this is nowhere near the actual cost.

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: The total cost for the.... It’s more than the command centre. It’s the planning operations area for the G-8 and G-20. What we called the unified command centre was built within that building. It’s a 55,000-square-foot building. It was the only building in the area that we could obtain at the time that had a large enough footprint to house the planning team that we knew we were going to have to put together for G-8 and then again for the G-20. We also had our joint intelligence group in that building. The cost was roughly \$16.5 million, and not \$27 million, or whatever was quoted.

One of the reasons it was as costly was because of the security requirements for all of our partner agencies. As you can imagine, we had the highest level of security groups in the country in that building. No one was going to come and work there unless the building was at a top secret level. There was a requirement in the construction of that site to put more into it than would normally be put into an ordinary building. It was costly, but that was a part of doing business. We needed everyone together. We needed all of our security partners. Without that site, we wouldn’t have had them, and we wouldn’t have been able to secure the sites in the manner we did.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Elcock, maybe you can help me a little bit here. My friends across are experts in security. My understanding was that there were large numbers of international people, large numbers of Canadians, and somewhere in excess of 3,000 press people who were at the summit in Toronto. Are there hotel rooms at the CNE grounds?

Mr. Ward Elcock: No, there aren’t, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Would it mean, then, that to move these large numbers of people there would be huge costs in providing security?

Mr. Ward Elcock: If the event had been held at the CNE grounds, we would have had to secure both the CNE grounds and also the hotel area in downtown Toronto, since that would have been the only place people could have stayed, and there were relatively large delegations. And likely enough, in terms of trying to control the specific area of a number of hotels, it would have looked pretty much the same whether or not the meeting was held in the MTCC or in the CNE grounds.

But if it had been held in the CNE grounds, we would have had the added cost, both human and monetary, of securing the CNE grounds as well as securing the various routes to and from the CNE grounds, and that would have been a much more complicated security operation.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Is it also a fair assessment that to do what you did do, or what was done in a very successful way with all of the partners, took a great deal of cooperation from police agencies, not only in Toronto but in a broader perspective from perhaps even across the country? Would it have been a real drag on resources of police agencies to do anything additional?

Mr. Ward Elcock: Particularly in a year where we already had the Olympics—which was a huge draw on police forces from across the country, because no police force in Canada is really big enough on its own within a specific city to manage an event the size of the G-8 and the G-20—the reality was that police forces were seeking assistance from other police forces across the country.

The RCMP, in particular, drew from its other divisions in order to have sufficient numbers of people in Toronto. And that was difficult for many of the other police forces, given that there had already been a fairly large loan of people for the Olympics in February.

• (1625)

The Chair: Mr. MacKenzie, I’m sorry, your time is up.

Monsieur Gaudet or Madam Mourani, you have five minutes.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I will be splitting my time with my colleague a little later on.

Minister, you seemed to be saying earlier on that you were not very responsible for what happened. You say you were not informed of this. You are constantly deferring to Mr. Elcock, who should perhaps soon be appointed Minister of Public Safety, given the fact that he seems better informed and able to answer our questions than you are.

Perhaps you can tell us whether at least your department or even yourself—perhaps in cooperation with Mr. Elcock, who knows?—sent very clear directives as to security and the treatment of protesters? If so, what were these directives?

[English]

Hon. Vic Toews: The operational issues are handled by the RCMP and the various police forces, not the Minister of Public Safety. I would not have sent any directives of that nature.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Very well, I will repeat my question. This time, I will try to make sure that you have an accurate picture of the situation. When we talk of protesters, we get the impression of an impersonal mass of people. So I will name a few names, I will mention the names of a few young people. Some of them are here, others are not. Some will come to appear before our committee. Jacynthe Poisson, Maryse Poisson, Kevin Gagnon, Wissam Mansour, Will Prosper, Nargess Mustapha, Marie-Eve Desrosiers, Émilie Guimond-Bélanger, Julien Parent-Houle, Bruno, Létitia, Sylvia Bissonnette, Lyne Dubord, Patrick Sicotte, Mathieu Boucher, France Kirouette, Dominic Palladini. These are young people who are now completely disillusioned with your Canada, because they would never have imagined they could ever have been treated like rats as they were in Toronto.

At the very least, even if you are responsible for nothing, could you apologize to them, Minister? These people are not rats, Minister. They are human beings, people who took to heart their vision of democracy, something you have broken, you, and the major institutions in attendance today. Do you realize, Minister, the image of Canada that has been given to these young people in Toronto, young people who now no longer believe in protesting nor in Canadian democracy? What do you have to say to these young people?

[English]

Hon. Vic Toews: Well, Madam Mourani, all I can suggest is that Canada is one of the most open countries with respect to the right to protest, the right to demonstrate. In fact, I've been subject to a demonstration or protest from time to time myself. I've always been pleased that people would take the time to recognize me in that way, even if I don't agree with them. But in this country individuals are free to protest according to law. As I've indicated, if there are any improprieties that have—

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Minister, 900 people were incarcerated because they went to protest.

[English]

Hon. Vic Toews: Well, if you want to hear from me—

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: I have heard you very well.

[English]

The Chair: Madam Mourani, just let Mr. Toews—

Hon. Vic Toews: I don't need to come here and just listen to you. I can listen to you in the House of Commons any time.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: I am telling you that 900 people protested and no longer believe...

[English]

Hon. Vic Toews: If you want me to speak, I'll speak. If you don't, interrupt.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: I do not have much time, Minister. I asked you a question and you have yet to respond. Will you apologize? Yes or no, quite simply.

[English]

Hon. Vic Toews: Well, you haven't given me an opportunity to answer, and it's obvious that you're not interested in any answers here. Just judging from the questions, it's clear that you don't understand the basic rule that politicians do not get involved in security operations and that the police make those determinations. Police on the street make those determinations.

• (1630)

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: I am not talking about operations, Minister.

[English]

The Chair: Madam Mourani, let him finish his statement.

Hon. Vic Toews: It appears to me that you don't understand the fundamental distinction between the responsibility of elected individuals and that of police in operational situations. If you want to have that discussion, we can have that discussion.

What I can do for you is suggest that you read the Hughes report. If you want to read the Hughes report, it'll give you a very clear indication of what not to do as a politician, in terms of directing police. The prior Liberal government in fact adopted the position that you are advocating.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Did you call for a public inquiry? You could do so, that is your role. Your role is to call for a public inquiry.

Are you going to do it? No, once again—

[English]

The Chair: Thank you. Our time is up, unfortunately.

Mr. Minister, I want to thank you for coming today. You have given us the hour we asked for and a little longer, and we appreciate your attendance here. As you know, the committee will continue with this study for several more meetings, at which we will hear from various witnesses. We thank you for being here initially to kick-start this study.

Hon. Vic Toews: Well, Mr. Chair, if I might just say, as always it's a pleasure appearing in front of this committee and having an opportunity to exchange views and comments with all of the members. I want to thank each and every one of them for the hard work they do on behalf of the people of Canada.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

We're going to continue with the meeting as we go here, as the minister exits, and we will go back to Mr. Norlock.

Mr. Norlock.

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

My questions will be to Chief Superintendent MacNeil.

First, having some background in policing—about 30 years, although not in the same capacity as yourself, Chief—would I be correct in saying that the majority of costs in the RCMP or in the security arrangements were labour related?

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: Yes, that would be correct.

Mr. Rick Norlock: Would it also be correct to say there is a significant proportion of this that would be attributable to overtime?

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: There would be a portion of that, that's correct.

Mr. Rick Norlock: And I gather, because you're still awaiting invoicing from the Province of Ontario, the City of Toronto, and other police agencies, that at this point you wouldn't have the exact numbers of hours used in police overtime.

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: I don't have the exact numbers in overtime, no.

Mr. Rick Norlock: But it would be reasonable that it would be a significant double-digit percentage.

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: I can't comment exactly.

Mr. Rick Norlock: Okay, that's fair.

It would also be reasonable to say that some of those operational costs, if they have to do with labour, would be recouped by the government through income tax payments. You don't have to comment. I can tell you that I think it's all reasonable that if you receive a paycheck, this occurs.

The other significant portion is...the police also have a responsibility not only to protect the lives, safety, and property of citizens, but they also have a duty to protect the lives, safety, and property of people who are acting as either lawful demonstrators or, quite frankly, even as hooligans, and you're responsible for the safety of the people you arrest.

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: Yes. If I may, I'd just like to go back to the fact that if you look at the week leading up to the G-8 and the G-20, there was protest activity all that week, and sometimes that's not remembered. We had spent a lot of time—I'm talking about the Integrated Security Unit—in advance of the summits meeting with protest groups to talk about where they were going to protest, when they were going to come, in order to make sure that we had enough police officers on the street to handle the traffic and the crowd control issues that would come from that.

If you remember, and if you were watching television that week, we had protest activity all the way to Friday. We had no problems; we had no arrests. But you would have seen police officers on bicycles or walking along with the protest groups all week long to ensure that the intersections were blocked so the groups could go through. It wasn't an adversarial set-up between the police and the protesters at all.

We spent a lot of time in preparation for that. It wasn't until the weekend that there were arrests.

So, yes, it is absolutely true that it's necessary for the police to protect those people and those rights, and we value those rights. That's something that is lost in some of this.

•(1635)

Mr. Rick Norlock: Any more time, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Yes, you have another minute and a half.

Mr. Rick Norlock: Thank you very much.

Let me get this straight, because I always ask my questions in a way so that the person sitting at home can understand what's occurring here at committee, and I try not to get into the politics, as some people want to politicize this.

What you're saying is that for those people who were protesting the week before, in other words, surrounding the G-20, etc., for those people who wanted to lawfully protest, there were meetings between the police and them, and those protests went off fairly well, without any significant incidents, and the police and the protesters were cooperating.

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: That's correct. We had what we referred to as community relations groups that met with anyone who was planning a protest. They would come and meet with us, of course, and we tried to facilitate that to the best of our ability.

Mr. Rick Norlock: Without commenting necessarily upon motivation, from those that you didn't get that kind of cooperation, does the information you have at this time, as a result of the people who didn't want to meet with you, didn't want to discuss what their intentions were...would I be correct in saying that those groups, and your anecdotal observations from those groups, tended to be the people who you had the most reason to come into negative contact, in other words, arrests or detentions?

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: I can't really comment on that. I don't know exactly who represented what groups.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. MacNeil.

We'll now go to Ms. Mendes.

[Translation]

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to put some questions and address some comments to Mr. Elcock.

I think that the minister's incompetence has clearly been revealed with respect to his explanations justifying the decision regarding the location and site of the summits.

When the decision was made to split the summits in two, one to be held in Huntsville and the other in Toronto, who defended the idea of putting on such a summit right in the heart of Toronto's commercial and financial centre? Who thought that this was a good idea, that it would be easy to make such a location secure, despite the tremendous amount of activity that takes place here?

[English]

Mr. Ward Elcock: The choice of a site for any summit is a complicated issue, and a number of organizations had an interest or a role in that process. It wasn't a security decision as to whether a site was or was not the appropriate venue. Once it was clear that Huntsville was too small to host the G-20—it simply didn't have the infrastructure to do so—the only alternative was to move the G-20 to Toronto, which had the capacity to host and the required infrastructure.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: But why would you choose Huntsville to begin with? Was it because it was Minister Clement's riding?

Mr. Ward Elcock: Huntsville was originally chosen as the site for the G-8, which has normally been held in rural areas. It was actually a pretty good site and did a very good job of hosting the G-8. It had the right size venue for a G-8, was a more rural area, and was relatively easy to secure. That's why Huntsville was originally chosen.

[Translation]

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: I see.

Once we learned that we were also going to be organizing the G20 Summit, why did we maintain this idea of holding these summits in two separate locations?

Canada is a country that has a tremendous number of quite varied tourist facilities that are very well able to handle this type of event.

Why was no consideration given to other locations, such as Montebello, Mont-Tremblant or Banff? Canada has plenty of locations that would be easier to secure where we could have held this type of event.

[English]

Mr. Ward Elcock: There are very few places, when you actually look at the numbers involved, where the G-20 could have been held. The reality is that it needed to be held somewhere where there was enough infrastructure to manage it. Unfortunately, most of those venues would be too small for a G-20.

• (1640)

[Translation]

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: How is it that the rest of the world can organize such events at a lower cost and without resorting to so many changes, such as the fake lake, to name but one example!

[English]

Mr. Ward Elcock: I think the so-called “fake lake”—and that's not the appropriate description—was not a part of the security budget, in any case.

I have yet to see a complete budget for any other G-8 or G-20 that's been held anywhere else in the world. The reality is, as far as countries reporting the full costs, we are probably the most transparent jurisdiction in the world.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: A country like Britain has this audited publicly by their auditor. They can't hide it.

Mr. Ward Elcock: It's not a case of other countries hiding costs; in many cases costs are accounted for in very different ways.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: Okay, so why say that we're the most transparent? We may account for it differently, but it's not necessarily because we're more transparent.

Mr. Ward Elcock: On what that accounting ultimately means, if the U.K. were to host it—as they did host the G-20 in London—they have a large number of police within the London area and would not need to call for additional forces from across the country, as we would have to do in any G-8 or G-20. So the reality is that their accounts would show that the police were drawn from within the London area, but there would be no accounts for the accommodation of the police or all the care and feeding of the police because they would simply go home for tea.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Elcock.

We'll move to Mr. McColeman.

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brant, CPC): I thank you for being here as well and for getting into some of the details, now that the minister is gone.

As we watched the G-20 unfold, the one thing Canadians did realize is that free speech is a principle of our democracy, and I think when the violent mob that was made up of the thugs, hooligans, and anarchists who set fire to the police cars and damaged property during the G-20...in no way, shape or form does it represent the democracy or our way of life.

I'm interested in delving into how the police, under some extremely difficult situations, were tasked and how they conducted

themselves. Toronto Police Chief Bill Blair was quoted as saying that the police were there to facilitate peaceful protests. He even went as far as saying the police responsibility in a democracy is the right to protect peaceful protests.

My question, really, is for Chief Superintendent MacNeil. During an interview last week on TV Ontario, Toronto Chief of Police, Bill Blair, said there was excellent communication among the security partners and a very clear command structure. First, do you agree with Chief Blair's assessment? Second, in order to give Canadians an idea of the kind of preplanning, the amount of planning that goes into these things—because I'd like to know a little more in-depth about how far in advance security arrangements were being worked on—how much effort went into that, as well as the costs associated with that?

Could you comment on that?

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: Yes, thank you.

First, I agree with the chief that there was excellent cooperation between all of the security forces involved in the operation. As an example of the length of time of planning, I took my role to start planning the G-8 in August of 2008, so it was two years in advance of the G-8 and G-20.

We started our team in the Barrie area. We had set up in Huntsville originally but couldn't find a place large enough to set up a command centre and everything for the G-8, so we moved to the first location we could find that had the facilities and had places for the people to stay. That was Barrie, so we built our command centre in Barrie.

I should probably explain the structure of the command so it's very clear to everyone, because I hear the question asked, who was in charge? The command structure is such that if we start at the ground level first, every site, whether it be a hotel or a conference centre where the leaders were staying, was called a site, and in that site there was a person in charge. So we have a site command to start with, and that's the lowest level of command. It's the ground level. It's where people, we hope, will take most of the decisions and deal with the issues at that level.

The next level of command above that is called an area command, and we had an area command in Huntsville and an area command in Toronto. The Toronto area command oversaw all the sites in Toronto and the area command in Huntsville all the sites in Huntsville. If a site commander had an issue that he was uncomfortable with, he would raise that to the area command level and they would help him in that decision. He also briefed up constantly to the area command.

On the top of that, there was the strategic command that was based in Barrie, and that's what we called the unified command centre that we referred to earlier. That unified command centre had representatives from all of the police agencies that were involved on the ground, so they were monitoring all of the activity. The UCC was also responsible for the movement of the internationally protected persons, the air support that you saw, and things of that nature. But the UCC's control over the ground or the site would not be hands-on. It would be at more of a strategic level. For example, if they needed assistance, if a site commander called to the area command and said there were not enough police officers at the Royal York Hotel and there were not enough in all of Toronto to support that, they would call us at the UCC and the UCC commander would move some people from Huntsville. It had that oversight strategic ability to move people.

That's the command layer. So when you talk about a particular arrest on the street in Toronto, it wouldn't be someone in Barrie making that decision. It wouldn't even be someone at the area command level making that decision. It would be someone on the street in Toronto making that decision.

As I said earlier, the best method for policing is to have the decision at the lowest level, and that's what would happen. It would be impossible for someone in Barrie to make a decision on a particular arrest.

If that explains the command structure to you, I think it's something that may clear up any misconceptions.

• (1645)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. McColeman.

We will move to Mr. Holland and then to Madam Mourani and Monsieur Gaudet.

Mr. Mark Holland: In the minister's words, he didn't have the competence to answer many of the questions that I posed to him, so I'm going to turn back to some of the questions I was going at before.

Just today, Korea, which will be hosting the G-20, announced what their security price tag is going to be. They peg it at \$24.9 million Canadian. Now, that's not a little off our figure; that's a world off our figure. If you look at Kananaskis, in Canada, if you want to take a domestic example—now admittedly that was the G-8—we're talking about a security tab that was around \$200 million, which was significantly cheaper again.

I'm just trying to understand. What I heard in the statement earlier was that for the G-20 there was nowhere but downtown Toronto. Nowhere else could host. This was the only option. It was the best option, the most secure option, the cheapest option. Frankly, what I'm hearing is that you'd do it all over again. That's what really worries me about all of this.

So let me pose this to Madam Morin and to Mr. Elcock: looking at the rest of the world and best practices out there, is downtown Toronto the best place to put the G-20, and would you do it again?

Ms. Marie-Lucie Morin (National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister and Associate Secretary to the Cabinet, Privy Council Office): First of all, let me thank the committee for inviting me to appear this afternoon.

Mr. Holland, I wanted to complement Mr. Elcock's earlier answer by saying that G-20 summits, by definition, have all been held in urban environments because of the number of participants and because of the infrastructure exigencies associated with holding such multi-faceted summits as the G-20. We've had London. We have had Pittsburgh. We will have Seoul. So it is the case, in fact, that the cities that can actually receive such summits are, by definition, highly urban environments.

Mr. Mark Holland: No, I understand. And I don't mean to interject, but let's be specific, because my time is limited. We spent more than any other jurisdiction has. This was an enormous amount of money. So the question is simple—and maybe both of you can just answer it yes or no. Would you do it again? Do you feel mistakes were made or do you feel that if we found out we were hosting the G-20 again, we'd say lock and load and let's do it the same way?

• (1650)

Mr. Ward Elcock: Mr. Chairman, the choice of a summit site is not security's choice, as I said earlier. There may be security implications that would cause a specific site to be a less good site or a better site. At the end of the day, the government makes the choice of what the site is.

Mr. Mark Holland: No, but this is critical, and I have only five minutes.

I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, I have to interrupt because the minister told me that he couldn't answer about where it was placed because, he said, he didn't have the competence to make the decision.

The Chair: No, Mr. Holland, that's not what he said.

Mr. Mark Holland: Well, who gave the advice? You say you're not responsible for the selection of the site, and the minister said that he relied on your advice, so who's responsible for selecting the site?

Mr. Ward Elcock: Mr. Chairman, as I said earlier, there are a number of groups and organizations that have a view on where a summit should be held.

Mr. Mark Holland: But who chose it?

Mr. Ward Elcock: At the end of the day, it's a choice made by government on the basis of the advice given to them by security, but also by the Senate management office, the Department of Foreign Affairs, and other departments and agencies within government.

Mr. Mark Holland: But on what advice was it made? He said it was your advice to put it there. That's what he said.

Mr. Ward Elcock: Our advice, with respect to security issues, was part of that framework upon which the government made the decision, but not—

Mr. Mark Holland: But was it specifically to do what they did? Was that your advice? He said that he did what you said, and that you told him to put it there, and he put it there. Is that the case?

Mr. Ward Elcock: At the end of the day, where to put the summit was a government decision. There was a stream of advice—

Mr. Mark Holland: Was that your advice, though?

Mr. Ward Elcock: There was a stream of security advice. There was also advice coming from the Senate management office, the Department of Foreign Affairs, and others, regarding the best site, because there are a number of issues that cross departmental and agency lines.

Mr. Mark Holland: I'll try just one more time, for just a yes or no. He said that it was your advice, and he referred to you. He said it was your decision, your advice, and that he just did what you said. Was that your advice, and would you do it again?

Mr. Ward Elcock: Mr. Chairman, at the end of the day, the minister is the Minister of Public Safety, and the advice that he would have received from me was on the issue of security. I wasn't advising the minister which was the best site to choose from a foreign affairs point of view or which specific venue could actually be made to look like a meeting site. That was the Senate management office. At the end of the day, my responsibility was looking after the security.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Elcock.

We'll now move to Madam Mourani and Monsieur Gaudet.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Is Mr. Gaudet also entitled to five minutes?

[English]

The Chair: No. Together you have five minutes.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Mr. Elcock, did you provide any advice as to the treatment of the demonstrators, as to the way the demonstrators were to be treated, and to the type of place where they were to be held, etc.? Was that part of the advice that you gave?

[English]

Mr. Ward Elcock: Mr. Chairman, it is not my responsibility nor the Privy Council Office's responsibility, and, as the minister said earlier, not his to give direction to the police. The police know how to manage. They know what the appropriate rules are. They have organizations that oversee them. They have organizations that review them. I don't issue directions to the police as to how they should manage demonstrators. Those are issues with which the police deal.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Thank you.

Mr. MacNeil, could you tell me whether the University of Toronto gymnasium is a site of interest?

[English]

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: I can't speak specifically of what occurred in Toronto on that day. I was not there. I was not present for that particular aspect of the investigation, so I think that question would be better placed with the Toronto Police Service when they come to appear before the committee.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: So you were not responsible for the arrests made in the gymnasium, in Toronto?

[English]

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: No. I would not be in charge of the arrests at the gym in Toronto.

Mr. Ward Elcock: Mr. Chairman, I think there's an important point to make here that may be at issue a little.

• (1655)

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Elcock.

Mr. Ward Elcock: Chief Superintendent MacNeil spoke earlier about the command structure. That was how the police were tied together and how they cooperated. At the end of the day, I think it's important for members to understand that each police force, within its jurisdiction, retained responsibility for its jurisdiction, which is why I think Chief Superintendent MacNeil is saying to you that because those events occurred within Toronto, it would be appropriate to direct those questions to the police force that actually had jurisdiction and was responsible for enforcing the law in that jurisdiction.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Mr. MacNeil, were you aware of all of the human rights abuse allegations that were made? What do you think of that?

[English]

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: Again, yes, I've heard of the allegations. I would have to wait. Again, there are many reviews going on right now into those allegations. There are investigations. As has been mentioned earlier by the minister, there is a reporting process for each person who feels they have a complaint to make. I really couldn't pass opinion on that.

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Gaudet, you have two minutes.

Mr. Roger Gaudet (Montcalm, BQ): Thank you very much, that will be adequate.

If I understand correctly, neither you, nor the lady, nor the minister were responsible. In your opinion, who would be responsible? You said that each police officer was responsible. When everyone is responsible, no one is. I cannot comprehend the Minister of Public Safety telling me that he is not responsible for anything. If that were true, we would no longer need a minister.

A little earlier, the minister stated that the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police was responsible. The problem is that we don't see him. You are all saying that you were not responsible, but who is responsible for what? Are we going to get an answer some day? Four months have elapsed. I hope that the police officers from Montreal who went to work in Toronto have now gone back to Montreal. I cannot understand how, after four months, you have not yet submitted an invoice.

I do not know if there are still police officers on site in Toronto to verify what is going on, but your system has some major problems. Indeed, your system is very poorly organized, and this is what we call our public safety system! For example, we have only to look at the RCMP inquiries into the Air India affair, in 1988, for which we have yet to have an answer after three investigations. We really have a major problem. We should do as the Auditor General of Canada has done and ask for a government response and not a response from a minister. Earlier, the minister told me that he was not aware of anything.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. MacNeil, do you want to try that one?

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: Well, I can tell you what I'm responsible for, if that would help. I was responsible, as the Integrated Security Unit commander, for putting together the security system for the G-8/G-20. What that meant is that I couldn't do it myself. The jurisdiction for the G-8 was OPP jurisdiction. The jurisdiction for the G-20 was Toronto police jurisdiction. Peel Regional Police has jurisdiction for the airport where all the leaders landed. The Canadian Forces have a unique capability that they bring to all of these events.

In addition, because we didn't have enough police officers in those specific police services that I just mentioned, we had to bring in police officers from all over Canada. My role was to ensure all of that was coordinated.

When it comes to a specific arrest or the detention of a specific individual, I have to defer to the person who made that arrest. I cannot speak on their behalf. No police officer can speak on another police officer's behalf in that regard.

[Translation]

Mr. Roger Gaudet: You must have been responsible for something, Mr. MacNeil. You stated that you had worked on the organization in 2008. I find there's a problem within the RCMP. You never provided any answer whatsoever to the government's questions, whether it be about the sponsorship scandal or anything else. We never get any answers from you except—

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Gaudet. I've already given you an extra minute and a half, and I'm glad I did; it was good.

Mr. Davies.

Mr. Don Davies: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to continue on that. We're talking about the G-8 and G-20 summits. This was a federal exercise, and there are no federal inquiries going on, save what's happening at this committee. Every other board that's looking into this is either provincial or municipal.

We have before this committee the Minister of Public Safety. We have the special advisor, Mr. Elcock. We have the national security advisor to the Prime Minister. We have the commander of the Integrated Security Unit. And all I hear is that someone else has the answers.

I'm going to try to be focused here.

Mr. Elcock, the question that Mr. Kania was asking you about asking the minister was about the choice of two sites. My understanding of the minister's evidence was quite clear. He was very clearly saying that this was your advice to him, to have two sites.

Is that correct, or not? Was that your advice?

• (1700)

Mr. Ward Elcock: Mr. Chairman, the minister is the Minister for Public Safety and he was referring to the kinds of advice I gave him, which was in respect to security matters.

As I've already said, the decision on whether it would be one site, two sites, or which site it would be is a decision for the government, not for a single minister. It was a decision by the government, and it depended upon a number of streams of advice, one of which was security. But security was not the sole or deciding factor.

Mr. Don Davies: I'm no security expert, but it would seem to me that one site is easier to secure than two.

Mr. Ward Elcock: Mr. Chairman, that's a generalization that I'm not sure I'm quite ready to go to. The reality is usually that one site is better, but it can depend upon what you're confronted with—the nature of the site and so on. Reality has a way of intruding, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Don Davies: Chief Superintendent MacNeil, I appreciate the difficulty, but as the head of the Integrated Security Unit... My understanding is that there were up to 10 different entities brought together that were responsible for security, including a number of federal entities: the RCMP, CSIS, the Canadian Forces, among others.

Is that correct?

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: Yes, that's correct.

Mr. Don Davies: Who's responsible for their actions and behaviour?

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: Each agency is responsible, and each person. It starts with the individual. Each individual is responsible for their own actions and behaviour.

Mr. Don Davies: I mean ultimately, who's responsible?

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: Their own agency would be responsible for them.

Mr. Don Davies: I had two young students from Kelowna, B.C., who came to see me. They were sleeping in the gym at the University of Toronto, and they were awakened, along with 100 other people, at six in the morning by police bursting in with their guns drawn. They were kicked in the ribs. They were arrested. They said every one of them was under arrest for conspiracy to commit a criminal act.

That doesn't just happen by an officer who wakes up one morning and decides to arrest 100 people. Who would have been responsible for making a decision like that, to do a mass arrest of sleeping students at the University of Toronto?

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: We talked about the jurisdictional responsibilities earlier.

The Toronto Police Service retains jurisdictional responsibility for the city of Toronto. I coordinate the event. The RCMP is the lead to make sure that security is provided. I look at everyone's operational plans before the event. We go over the plans, and at the end of the day I will sign off and say I'm satisfied: we have adequate personnel, we—

Mr. Don Davies: Sir, I respect your answer, but you're not answering the question. I'm just trying to find out who would have been responsible for making a call like that. You're a security person—

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: I'm trying to get to that so I can explain it. Just so you understand, I'm not trying to avoid your question; I'm trying to explain my role and my responsibility.

My role and responsibility are to bring all those people together. But Toronto Police Service, the OPP, Peel Regional Police maintain their jurisdictional responsibilities. If there were arrests, they would coordinate that.

Mr. Don Davies: Sir, I'm sorry to interrupt again; I only have five minutes. I understand, but you're not answering my question.

Who would be responsible for a decision like that?

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: If the arrest occurred in Toronto, it was Toronto Police Service.

Mr. Don Davies: But, sir, the whole summit occurred in Toronto. There were military; there was RCMP; there was CSIS. You're saying the Toronto police were responsible for all the decisions that were made?

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: Not every decision. It depends on what the decision was. As I stated earlier, if we are moving motorcades in the city....

It would take me a long time to explain, but I can. There are three specific areas of responsibility. One is what we called the controlled access zone; that means the area around the conference centre where the conference was actually held. That's the total jurisdiction of the RCMP during the event. Then there was the restricted access zone, a little bigger area that took in the hotels. You can draw another circle on a map around that. That, again, is RCMP jurisdiction. Outside that circle we now get into what's called an interdiction zone and then the rest of the city, and that's the Toronto Police Service.

Mr. Don Davies: You mentioned civil liberties and the right of people to protest. This was the largest mass arrest in Canadian history. Nine hundred innocent Canadians were arrested and then let go. Not thugs and hooligans, but bystanders and people who were peacefully protesting, journalists, lawyers. Do you have anything to tell this committee about whether this was a success or a failure from a security point of view? I imagine public safety also includes the right of people to safely protest. What's your comment on that?

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: We went into the security operation with several goals, one being to protect the people of Toronto and to protect the internationally protected persons who came. Another goal was to ensure that the conference and the summits were able to continue.

From a security standpoint, the protection of the IPPs and the conference went off without a hitch. This doesn't always happen, and

in parts of the world there are disturbances and roads blocked, people can't get to meetings. Nothing was delayed.

We set our fences where we did to secure a specific area of the city and we were successful in doing that. We were very successful.

The question you've asked about arrests, those things will have to be answered by someone else. I can tell you the operation was very successful. The decision on whether the arrests are justified is not for me to make.

• (1705)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. MacNeil.

We'll now move to Mr. MacKenzie and Mr. Lobb.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: I'll share the time with Mr. Lobb.

Mr. Elcock, I would like to give you a little quote from a newspaper to indicate that no less an authority agreed with you, or whoever made the decision about Huntsville...and maybe my friends opposite will appreciate the context. It says this is from the *Huntsville Forester* September 17, 2008:

We want to make it very clear to all the residents of this riding that when we are the government of Canada, the next G8 Summit will be held at Deerhurst Resort in Huntsville.... You heard it from me: the G8 Summit will be in this community when we form the next government.

That was Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff.

So you can see, folks, the choices were shared.

Mr. Lobb.

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Thank you very much for attending today. I can imagine how pleasant it is to answer questions from six Monday morning quarterbacks. We all know everybody is a lot smarter after the game on Sunday.

In the riding I represent there isn't one town over 10,000 people. This question is for Mr. Elcock.

For the benefit of the six people on the other side of the table here—

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: I have a point of order.

[English]

The Chair: On a point of order, Madam Mourani.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to remind you that all members of this House and all those seated around this table have every right to ask questions.

I do not appreciate the term that was translated into French into my ears by the expression "gérant d'estrade". That expression does not apply to colleagues that we respect. We may not have the same opinions, but I find that kind of wording unacceptable.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you. I'll check the book, but as far as I know, Monday morning quarterback is not unparliamentary. I think we all understand what the reference means. It means looking back—

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: That's not the case in French, Mr. Chairman.

[English]

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Lobb.

Mr. Ben Lobb: Thank you. There are other terms you can use instead of that.

The complexity of trying to arrange housing and safe accommodation for 10,000 people must be quite staggering. I just want you to elaborate a little more on that. Again, the Monday morning quarterbacks on the other side struggled to get one hundred and some people to vote the right way. Can you explain to the committee and for Canadians how onerous a task it is to try to lay the infrastructure and housing for 10,000 people?

Mr. Ward Elcock: I think, Mr. Chairman, Chief Superintendent MacNeil may be able to give you a better answer than I can. The reality is that it is a huge challenge. I believe in the case of Seoul, for example, they expect to have over 50,000 security folks. I think they're going to put them in tents, but I'm not sure what their plans are.

It is a very difficult challenge. It was a challenge particularly for the G-8 because it is a more rural area and there isn't sufficient hotel or motel infrastructure. In the case of Kananaskis, there was, and a temporary site wasn't built. But in the case of the G-8, obviously a temporary accommodation facility was required. In Toronto, there was infrastructure that could be used to put RCMP officers and other police force members into.

Mr. Ben Lobb: Thank you.

This question is for Mr. MacNeil.

With 20,000 security personnel who were tasked with the safety and security of the protestors, as well as the people attending the G-20, you've made your points that other than a few broken windows and a few police cars being damaged, that is really the extent of the damage from the G-8 and G-20. Certainly, from your perspective, that must be a huge success, as there were no major injuries and certainly no loss of life. I wonder if you could comment on that.

• (1710)

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: I agree. As I stated earlier, and I stand by it, the security operation was a huge success. We were very fortunate that there weren't serious injuries. When you have that many people on the street, the potential is always there. As you know, in major events such as this in the past, there have even been deaths. So I was very pleased with that aspect of the summits.

Mr. Ben Lobb: Has there been frustration among your members about the undue criticism from politicians? Is there frustration there?

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: No. Members of the RCMP and the members of the Integrated Security Unit are very professional people. They're willing to listen to anyone's complaints. We have systems in place to accept complaints. If you come to our detachments across Canada, you'll see a form you can fill out to make a complaint if you think there is anything that has been done that the police shouldn't have done. We're public servants and we're used to scrutiny, but we're also very professional, and we all feel

good about the job we did and we're proud of what we did. I'm very proud of the members of the Integrated Security Unit.

Mr. Ben Lobb: We're very proud of you too.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Lobb.

We'll now move to Mr. Holland.

Mr. Mark Holland: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We're not getting any answers on accountability. There seem to be a lot of fingers pointing in other directions. Let me try on costs.

If I could, Mr. MacNeil, there are huge cost figures there, and the reason we're told why we can't get at specific details is that bills are still coming in. The frustrating thing here is that the things for which we do have bills...it doesn't seem like the bills are coming in; it's just that the details are not forthcoming. One example was the glow sticks. You have provided some information saying they were used by the Canadian Forces, and yet the minister said, and even Mr. Elcock said, it was inappropriate—those were the exact words—to use the Canadian Forces for these sorts of things.

Let me continue down the list. We're talking about high-end furniture, \$315,000; rooms and food at Yorkville's Park Hyatt Hotel, \$85,000. One bill alone for snacks at the Pickle Barrel was \$17,275.

What are the reasons we can't get the breakdown of this? Can you understand when more than \$1 billion was spent that Canadians would want additional information?

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: Yes, I understand that, and that's one of the reasons I'm happy to be here today to try to explain some of the numbers I've heard. When it comes to the—

Mr. Mark Holland: Just to be clear, I don't want you today to go through a roll call. It's been four months of an archeological expedition to try to get these receipts pulled out of the ground. All I'm saying is open it up. Let us see how this thing got to the price tag it's at. What really concerns me about it is there is a defence of it, saying this is what the cost is. We keep hearing that.

I have two questions, and then I will turn it over to Mr. Kania.

One, can you provide a breakdown of these costs, not just isolated one-offs that I'm talking about here, but anything you are not waiting for a bill for? I don't know what you'd be waiting for a bill for anyway.

The second comment is, how do you feel about those costs? Is this the new bar? Should we expect that every time Canada hosts the G-20, unlike every other country that hosts the G-20, these are the kinds of costs we should expect? Is this a new bar Canadians should expect going forward?

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: Thank you.

I can answer the question, actually. The RCMP cost in this particular summit was \$507 million. I will just explain as quickly as I can how we come to that cost.

If you picture, as I said earlier, all the sites, there are 40 sites involved in the G-8 and the G-20. What we do is send an operational team out to each site. They go to the site, they assess the site, and they do what's called a vulnerability risk assessment on the site. They come back to me and to our planning team and they say, this is what it's going to take to secure that site: x number of police officers, x amount of equipment. We take that amount and scrutinize it. We go over it and ask if it can be done for less, because we are, obviously, concerned with costs, but we're also concerned that—

• (1715)

Mr. Mark Holland: I don't mean to interrupt, but because time is limited, can you provide the costs?

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: Yes, I can.

Mr. Mark Holland: Is this the new bar? Should we expect these kinds of costs for summits going forward?

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: I'll take the second question first, if I may.

I feel very confident that the costs in this case were justified. Based on the formula we use to secure every site, as far as RCMP costs go, we projected \$507 million. We have spent, as of a month or so ago, \$329 million of that \$507 million.

On what we are waiting for, without getting into it too much, we have some MOUs with municipal partners that still have to come in—Toronto Police Service. But we're going to be able to sell some of the assets we purchased and recoup some money. So the number is fluctuating a little, and that's why we can't give you an exact number right now. But it was \$329 million up to the end of August.

Mr. Mark Holland: Okay, but I'm just saying to give us the costs you have and your estimates of the others. You would not have agreed to give a blank cheque. There would have been some estimate or some agreement around what those costs would be. Of course, you'd pay the bill later.

Mr. Kania.

The Chair: Mr. Kania, you have 30 seconds.

Mr. Andrew Kania: Thank you.

Mr. Elcock, Madame Morin, and Chief Superintendent MacNeil, did any of you provide advice to the Minister of Public Safety or the Conservative government to split the summit between Huntsville and Toronto?

Mr. Ward Elcock: As I said, where the summit would be held was a Government of Canada decision. Advice was provided from a number of streams, one of which was security. The security advice in some cases was positive or negative on a specific site. But at the end of the day, the decision on what site was chosen, and whether it was one site or two sites, was a Government of Canada decision.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Elcock.

Mr. Rathgeber.

Mr. Brent Rathgeber: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to all the witnesses for your attendance here today and for the good job you do in protecting Canadians.

I'm always concerned when members opposite are overly critical of security and police forces, especially in a difficult time like

policing the G-8 and G-20. So I join with my friend Mr. Lobb and the members on this side of the table in commending primarily Superintendent MacNeil, because he was the operations director of this operation, and all of the men and women under his command and from the other forces that were coordinated in that effort. I know it was a difficult job and I think he ought to be commended for his efforts.

I have a couple of questions. My friends on the opposite side of the table frequently find individuals who claim to have been aggrieved by some of those operations and the tactics of some of those people who may have been under your charge. But I suspect they were not under your charge, given the jurisdictional realities of that operation.

Superintendent MacNeil, are you aware of any complaints against members of the RCMP? Are there any files pending before the RCMP complaints commission?

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: I'm not aware of anything specific, but I don't want to say that I'm absolutely not aware. I'm just not aware, but I don't know if there is anything.

Mr. Brent Rathgeber: I know it may not be a complete answer, but to your knowledge, are you aware of any? I'm not aware of any.

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: To the best of my knowledge, I'm not aware of any.

Mr. Brent Rathgeber: Thank you.

On the operations themselves, I saw visions on TV that disturbed me, of police cars being overturned and windows being vandalized and broken. Can you explain to me the concept that I understand is sometimes employed by protestors at these events? I think the term is "black bloc". Are you familiar with that term? Can you tell me what that means?

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: "Black bloc" is a tactic that is utilized by groups who normally dress in black. Their faces are covered. They blend in with the crowd, and then at some point they dress in their black outfits, break away, and do what we saw at the G-20. The type of damage we saw at the G-20 is not unusual for black bloc tactics. Once they're finished doing that, they blend back into the crowd, take off the black outfits, and go back to the clothes they were wearing before. They're very difficult to find because of that.

• (1720)

Mr. Brent Rathgeber: So I take it from that answer that black bloc was employed by protesters at the G-20 in Toronto.

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: That's correct.

Mr. Brent Rathgeber: From an operations perspective, how do you handle that situation? Realistically, how can you handle individuals who essentially camouflage themselves so that they're unidentifiable either by vision or by camera, who engage in illegal acts, and then camouflage themselves back to something inconspicuous? How do you handle that from an operations perspective?

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: Fortunately, in the city of Toronto many thousands of people who witnessed these acts came forward with photographs and videotapes to assist the police. I can't talk about the specifics right now because much of this is still before the courts. But a lot of the information we gained was from the general public who were appalled by the actions they saw and felt they should assist the police. And we appreciate that.

Mr. Brent Rathgeber: Are you telling me that peaceful protesters and other individuals who just happened to be on the streets were assisting law enforcement in outing these black bloc protesters?

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: I don't know what their purpose was on the streets, if they were protesters or not. But members of the public did assist the police in identifying people, not only people using black bloc tactics but also people who were committing offences during that period of time.

Mr. Brent Rathgeber: You might not know this, but if you do, were these individuals local? Do you know if they were imported from other parts of Canada or perhaps other parts of the world to come here to protest? Or were the black bloc operators Ontarians?

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: I don't really want to comment on that right now. A lot of the people involved may still be before the courts and there are charges.

Mr. Brent Rathgeber: I appreciate that answer.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Those are my questions.

The Chair: You have another minute.

Mr. MacKenzie.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Mr. Elcock, I thought I heard you say a minute ago that they anticipate Seoul having upwards of 50,000 security people.

Mr. Ward Elcock: I think it's actually 50,000 public order troops. In fact, they are the people who would actually deal with demonstrations. The number of broad security folks would in fact be higher. But public order troops would be somewhere in the region of 50,000.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: My friends are focused on the cost. I've looked at some numbers, at the costs of other summits—and I'm sure you have. How would you compare the costs for two summits that in fact involved a group led by John Manley, another group, and some youth business people? There were a lot of people involved in all of these things. But how would those costs compare with the international summits that have been held in other countries?

Mr. Ward Elcock: Mr. Chairman, a good way to think about it is perhaps not only in terms of cost, because as I said earlier, different situations lead to different costings and also different governments have different ways of accounting for specific expenditures.

The reality is our security practices are not substantially different from other countries where summits have been held in the past. We're policing to essentially the same kinds of standards. It costs what it costs.

Frankly, in response to the first part of your question, I have never been able to find a fully accounted picture of the costs for any summit. Indeed, the Parliamentary Budget Officer and the Auditor General have made the same kinds of comments, that it's very hard

to find another example that is equally transparent and equally fully accounting for all of the expenditures. I simply haven't found it.

But the reality is it does cost a fair amount when you cost in all the items.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Thank you, sir.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. MacKenzie and Mr. Elcock.

To round out the day, we will conclude with Ms. Mourani.

Vous disposez de cinq minutes.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to continue with Mr. MacNeil. Earlier you talked about a tactic that you called "the black bloc". You said that this was a tactic used by demonstrators. Can you state that the 900 people arrested used the so-called black bloc tactic?

[English]

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: No, I'm not suggesting that the 900 people were all using black bloc tactics—definitely not.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Can you tell us approximately how many people used that tactic?

•(1725)

[English]

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: I would say the number would be in the hundreds. But again, I'm not suggesting that the 900 who were detained were all using black bloc tactics.

Mr. Ward Elcock: Having said that, Mr. Chairman, just to add a small point there, I think one of the key parts of black bloc tactics that is important to remember is crowd dynamics. What the black bloc folks want to do is draw wider numbers of the peaceful demonstrators into the protest.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Mr. Elcock, thank you for those details...

[English]

The Chair: Madam Mourani, please let him finish. I'll give you the time.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: My question was for Mr. MacNeil. I'd like to ask several questions, so I don't want to spend any more time on the issue of the black bloc. I'd like to continue.

I would like to know whether the RCMP uses *agents provocateurs*, namely police officers in civilian clothing who mingle with the crowd. Does the RCMP use any?

[English]

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: No, not for the purpose that the expression you're using is used for. We have people in civilian garb who blend in with the crowd to advise us of the movement of the crowd and what tactics they may using, but not to provoke or incite or anything of that nature.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: That's fine.

Moreover, you stated that you had received photos, images and videos from the public and that that enabled you to lay charges.

Why were there so few convictions if you had that much evidence? Perhaps I misunderstood what you said.

[English]

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: I can't speak specifically to the charges themselves or why there would be or wouldn't be convictions. That's before the courts, and I'll leave that to the courts to decide.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: All right.

Since you're an experienced police officer, you are very familiar with the law and human rights.

Do you find it normal that in Canada someone can be detained for 24 or 48 hours without being able to call a lawyer?

[English]

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: It wouldn't be normal to detain people without counsel. I don't know if that happened. I wasn't there; I don't know. But if you're asking the question, do we, we always supply counsel to people when they're detained or arrested.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: You know the RCMP very well. Is leaving people without food or drink for eight hours and carrying out strip searches a normal practice? Is this type of conduct normal in a society where the rule of law prevails, in your opinion?

[English]

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: If I may, I would like to refer to a document from Toronto that talks about the prisoner processing centre. I asked the question, how was the centre designed during the course of our planning? It was a collaborative effort involving both uniform and civilian members of the Toronto Police Service, from

areas such as divisional policing, the courts, and investigative and facilities management. The design and concept were based on Toronto Police Service policies and procedures, legal analysis, and current and previous best practices in the design by the design architect. With all of those people involved, I'm sure there were systems in place to deal with the people who were arrested.

The specific questions and the things you've brought up before will have to be brought to the people in charge.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: All right, thank you.

Could we have—

[English]

The Chair: Very quickly, Madam Mourani.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Could this document be tabled with the committee?

[English]

The Chair: I'm not sure if that's a public document. Is it a public document?

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: Right now it's simply an e-mail that I received. I asked the Toronto Police Service for it.

The Chair: All right.

But is it something that you'd be willing to submit?

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Could we obtain it?

[English]

C/Supt Alphonse MacNeil: Yes.

The Chair: All right. Thank you very much.

I want to thank each of you for attending today. As we continue, and throughout the study, if you want to go back over...and if you think, after you've left here, that perhaps you could have answered a different way or there would be some information that should be available to this committee, I would ask you to please submit that to our committee. Again, thank you.

Thank you committee.

We are adjourned.

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