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Chair

Mr. Kevin Sorenson

Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

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• (1530)

[Translation]

The Chair (Mr. Kevin Sorenson): Good afternoon, colleagues.

[English]

Welcome. This is meeting number 43 of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security on Monday, November 29, 2010.

In our first hour today we will have a briefing on the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and in our second hour our intentions are to move to committee business.

As our witness this afternoon, we are pleased to have Mr. William Elliott, Commissioner of the RCMP. Accompanying him today, all of the RCMP, are: Rod Knecht, senior deputy commissioner; Alain Séguin, chief financial and administrative officer; Tim Killam, deputy commissioner, policing support services; and, Al Nause, deputy commissioner, chief human resources officer.

I understand that Commissioner Elliott has an opening statement to deliver. Then we'll move into the first rounds of questioning.

Is this your first appearance before the committee, Commissioner, at least since I've taken on the chairmanship here?

Commissioner William Elliott (Commissioner, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): It is my first appearance, Mr. Chairman, with you in the chair. I have had the pleasure of appearing before the public safety committee in the past.

The Chair: Welcome. We look forward to your comments. The floor is yours, sir.

Commr William Elliott: Thank you.

[Translation]

Mr. Chair and members of the committee, I welcome the opportunity to appear before you today with a number of my senior executive colleagues.

I am sure the committee members are interested in hearing about some of the progress we have made in bringing about positive change in the RCMP. I believe that another reason the committee has invited us today may be media reports some months ago of complaints about me.

[English]

As you know, following those reports, Reid Morden was asked to conduct a workplace assessment. I understand that Mr. Morden found that at the time there was an unhealthy level of tension and

internal conflict in our senior management team. He indicated that my management style was seen by some as controversial, while others supported it. He concluded that on occasion I contributed to the tension. He recommended that we accelerate implementation of transformation initiatives.

The senior executive committee was already actively engaged in our transformation efforts. We recognized at the time that it was important for us to work even more closely together to foster a cohesive senior management team and to drive forward even harder to bring about positive changes. This we have done. We are united in our commitment to work towards these objectives.

I am pleased to report that we are having a great deal of success. We are building on significant changes that have already been made, as outlined in our recent report entitled, "Progress—Transformation of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police".

Mr. Chairman, I believe the clerk has been provided with copies for each of the members of the committee.

The report highlights some of the many improvements and best practices that our employees across Canada have implemented. It also demonstrates our ongoing commitment to our vision for change for the RCMP to be "an adaptive, accountable, trusted organization of fully engaged employees demonstrating outstanding leadership, and providing world-class police services". Let me give you a few examples.

When I became commissioner, the RCMP was consistently failing to meet its recruiting targets. Thanks to the development and implementation of proactive, targeted, and streamlined recruiting, we are now meeting and in fact exceeding our targets, allowing us to fill vacancies and build a stronger and increasingly diverse workforce that better represents the communities we serve.

[Translation]

We have taken steps to reduce the burden of bureaucracy by cutting through red tape and making better use of technology, freeing up our staff, including front line police officers, to spend their time more productively and increase their daily contact with people in the communities we serve.

• (1535)

[English]

Our policies and training, as well as our reporting and accountability requirements, have been strengthened, notably including in relation to the use of force. Our new learning strategy better supports the continuous learning that is necessary for a policing organization to keep pace in a rapidly changing environment. This will help us develop and maintain a competent and professional workforce.

We recently created the Office of Professional Integrity to promote ethical decision-making throughout the organization. The professional integrity officer, Joseph Hincke, was formerly a major-general in the Canadian Forces. His office oversees a broad range of activities, including values and ethics, discipline, and employee recognition.

He also supports the RCMP's "External Investigation or Review Policy", adopted earlier this year. The policy responds to legitimate public concerns about how RCMP employees are investigated following a serious incident such as an in-custody death. We understand that when such incidents occur, the public rightly expects that the actions of our employees will be subject to independent, professional, and thorough investigations. The policy requires us, wherever possible, to refer such investigations to independent agencies where they exist—for example, ASIRT in Alberta—or to other police forces.

[Translation]

Our policy is consistent with our overall objective of ensuring robust and credible independent oversight and review of the RCMP.

[English]

In addition, we are clearly on the public record as calling on governments to establish such independent investigative agencies, and I am encouraged by the recent indications by the Provinces of British Columbia and Nova Scotia that they are moving forward in this important area.

Mr. Chairman, those are just a few examples from the report, which is available online. As I said, we have provided copies to the clerk.

I would also like to speak briefly about a number of recent significant changes to the senior leadership of the RCMP, along with the realignment of our organizational structure. After consultations with contract partners and others, we have created two new deputy commissioner positions, deputy commissioner east and deputy commissioner west, while eliminating the former regional deputy commissioner positions for the Pacific, northwest, central, and Atlantic regions.

The important responsibilities of serving as the commanding officer for a division have been separated from the responsibilities of regional deputy. This allows each of our commanding officers across the country to focus on activities and issues within their division and to be supported by a deputy commissioner whose full-time responsibilities are to support them and to contribute to the overall leadership of the force as a member of the senior executive committee.

The deputy commissioners east and west have been asked to help strengthen links with headquarters and between regions and divisions and to champion and manage national and regional priorities. The deputies east and west will also play an important role in coaching and mentoring commanding officers and others. They will facilitate and support regional councils of commanding officers to address common issues across divisions; for example, in the Atlantic provinces or in the three northern territories. It is also anticipated that the deputies will play a key role in the management of our police services contracts and in our ongoing transformation activities.

[Translation]

It is also anticipated that the deputies will play a key role in the management of our police services contracts and in our ongoing transformation activities.

[English]

There have also been a number of changes of commanding officers and of individuals occupying other senior positions. I think our choice of uniquely qualified candidates is noteworthy and bodes well for the force as we move forward with our change agenda.

For example, Chief Superintendent—soon to be Assistant Commissioner—Russ Mirasty has been named the commanding officer of what we call F division: the Province of Saskatchewan. Russ has held a wide range of positions in six divisions, and since 2009 has been serving as the director general of national aboriginal policing at national headquarters here in Ottawa. He is a member of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band in northern Saskatchewan, the largest first nation in the province. He maintains a strong relationship with his home community and is fluent in the Cree language.

We also recently announced that Deputy Chief Norm Lipinski of the Edmonton Police Service will join the RCMP as an assistant commissioner and will serve as the Lower Mainland district commander in British Columbia, or E division. While serving with the Edmonton police, Deputy Chief Lipinski oversaw two significant organizational reviews. The pursuit review committee developed new policies in training, and the professionalism committee helped implement ongoing ethics training and the formation of the Edmonton police ethics committee. We feel very fortunate that Norm has joined our senior management team, which is focused on positioning the RCMP to meet the significant challenges ahead, while providing Canadians with the most effective and most efficient police services possible.

As I said earlier, we have made considerable progress. I personally believe, however, that if we are to truly transform the RCMP and ensure that it becomes and remains a world-class—indeed, a world-leading—police service, we need to take bold steps.

My senior executive colleagues and I believe that our objectives can best be achieved by enhancing the management and governance framework of the RCMP, investing the RCMP with the responsibility, authority, and flexibility to better manage our financial and human resources, and by our becoming a separate employer supported by a board of management.

The changes we are pursuing are neither simple nor easy, nor would they be a magic solution or a silver bullet. I believe, however, that significant governance and management changes can be both a catalyst and an enabler of transformational change. I also recognize that the changes my senior executive committee and I are working to advance will require the support and agreement of many others. Indeed, decisions about RCMP governance are not ours alone; they are the responsibility of governments.

Whatever decisions are taken, I have absolute faith that the professionalism, integrity, dedication, and passion of the employees of the RCMP will continue to drive the changes necessary to ensure that the RCMP remains one of the most progressive, effective, and dynamic police forces in the world.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for inviting us to be here today. My colleagues and I would be happy to respond to questions.

● (1540)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Commissioner. We'll move into the first round of questioning.

Ms. Mendes.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.): *Merci, monsieur le président.*

Thanks to all of you for coming in today to share with us your experience of change at the RCMP.

Commissioner Elliott, as you mentioned in your opening statement, you are aware that you have been accused of creating a certain atmosphere in the RCMP, where speaking truth to power is not the accepted norm. Do you believe there's a problem in speaking truth to power at the RCMP?

Commr William Elliott: I think it's a challenge to get people in a hierarchical organization to, as you say, speak truth to power, but I think we have made very considerable progress, not just over the last few months but over the last few years, in encouraging people to speak up. As I often say, I believe that everyone has an opportunity—in fact, an obligation—to speak, to raise issues, and to have those issues resolved.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: If you are taking steps to remedy the situation, how do you suggest that those steps be verified, or by whom? Should we have you back here in six months to give an update or to see whether the situation has in fact been remedied?

Commr William Elliott: I'd be happy to come back, Mr. Chairman, whenever the committee would think that useful.

I mentioned in the closing part of my remarks that a board of management is something that we see as helpful, and certainly I think such a board could have a role to play. I guess there are other means. Both our internal and our external communications, I think, can be looked at as an indication of the kind of environment we are trying to create and build on. A number of external mechanisms are currently in place to review our actions, including the current Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: Thank you very much.

Are you aware, Mr. Elliott, that we had invited former Assistant Commissioner Mike McDonell and Deputy Commissioner Raf Souccar to attend this meeting specifically?

Commr William Elliott: I am aware that an invitation went to Mr. McDonell, who is now a member of the Ontario Provincial Police, and I am aware that it was suggested that Mr. Souccar attend, but as of November 18, I proposed to the clerk that I attend with members of my senior executive committee.

● (1545)

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: Do you agree that they were chief critics of your management style and behaviour, which they called abusive and insulting? In fact, Deputy Commissioner Souccar, with Deputy Commissioner Killam here, were two of the officers who filed the original complaint.

I imagine that since former Assistant Commissioner McDonell left the force for the OPP, he would have a conflicting engagement. But Deputy Commissioner Souccar is still employed by the RCMP, and if you yourself can find time to come to committee, wouldn't it be appropriate that we ask Mr. Souccar to be here too?

Commr William Elliott: First of all, with respect to a number of the elements of the question, I am aware of the media reports with respect to complaints, and I am aware of some information in relation to complaints that were made against me in July. I must tell you that Mr. McDonell never spoke to me about any complaint at any point in my tenure as commissioner of the RCMP. Mr. Souccar and I have had many conversations, both before and after the media reports in July. I would venture to say that, to my knowledge, a number of the things reported in the media are factually incorrect.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: Do you mean the complaint is factually incorrect? Was it filed or not filed?

I think Deputy Commissioner Killam could tell us that.

Was the complaint filed?

Commr William Elliott: I'm happy to have Mr. Killam comment. I will turn things over to him in a moment. But I don't think it's as simple as whether a complaint was filed or a complaint was not filed. Clearly a number of individuals spoke to the Deputy Minister of Public Safety.

The Chair: Mr. Killam.

Deputy Commissioner Tim Killam (Deputy Commissioner, Policing Support Services, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): Yes, Mr. Chair. I was not one of those persons, contrary to what the media said, who filed an initial complaint and went to the Deputy Minister of Public Safety. I have nothing else to say about that, other than the fact that I was on vacation and came back to find out that there had been some complaints.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: And that there was this complaint filed...?

D/Commr Tim Killam: That's correct.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: Thank you.

Is it possible to know where Deputy Commissioner Souccar is currently located at your RCMP headquarters?

Commr William Elliott: Mr. Souccar is currently on annual leave.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: Sorry?

Commr William Elliott: He's on annual leave.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: Thank you very much.

I have a few minutes left...?

The Chair: You have almost a minute.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: On another subject, Commissioner Elliott, we found out that there were armed U.S. Homeland Security officials who were allowed to freely enter and exit Canada with the same powers as Canadian law enforcement officers. Does this mean anything to you?

Commr William Elliott: I'm not exactly sure what you are referring to. I know that the U.S. agency referred to as ICE, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, has entered into some cross-designation arrangements with some municipal police forces, not with the RCMP.

We do have a program called Shiprider, under which we cross-designate U.S. law enforcement in the marine mode. We have done that on a pilot basis, and there is legislation pending with respect to establishing an appropriate legal framework for it.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: Precisely: the legislation is pending. But can you tell us how many of these armed U.S. Homeland Security officials took part in the G-20 security operations?

Commr William Elliott: I don't have that information; perhaps one of my colleagues does. I'm not aware of any.

Deputy Commissioner Al Nause (Deputy Commissioner, Chief Human Resources Officer, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): I think you may be referring to the fact that on occasion U.S. Secret Service agents who come into Canada are sometimes appointed supernumerary special constables for the purpose of being able to carry their firearms, which is a reciprocal agreement that we have with many countries when our Prime Minister travels abroad. This is something that has occurred over the last 20 years.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll move to Madame Mourani.

Madame Mourani, vous avez sept minutes.

Commr William Elliott: Mr. Chairman, if I may add one point of clarification, the arrangement that Deputy Nause just referred to would certainly have been in place with respect to the Secret Service protecting the President of the United States while he was here for the G-8 and G-20 summits.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Commissioner.

Madame Mourani.

[Translation]

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

Good afternoon to everyone. I thank you for being here with us today.

Before broaching labour relations or management issues within the RCMP, I would like to know whether you read a document prepared by the RCMP entitled: *Human Trafficking in Canada: A Threat Assessment*.

• (1550)

Commr William Elliott: No, not yet.

Mrs. Maria Mourani: This document was published several months ago. I must admit that I was extremely shocked when I read it. I wondered whether the fact of considering prostitution as sex trade work was an inherent part of the RCMP philosophy.

Is that the case?

[English]

The Chair: Madame Mourani, can you give us the name of the document?

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Yes. I am referring to: *Human Trafficking in Canada: A Threat Assessment*. It is dated March 2010.

Does the RCMP consider prostitution to be sex trade work?

[English]

Commr William Elliott: I'm not sure I understand the question.

People involved in prostitution are commonly referred to as sex trade workers, so I don't understand the question behind the honourable member's question.

The Chair: Madame Mourani.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: The purpose of my question is to find out whether for the RCMP, prostitution is work.

[English]

Commr William Elliott: Yes....

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Okay—

Commr William Elliott: I don't think it's legitimate work, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: All right.

We have a point of order here from Mr. MacKenzie.

Mrs. Maria Mourani: *Mais c'est un travail, oui?*

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

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC): I think we've gotten into some difficulty here. I know the orders of the day say that it's a briefing on the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, but I think, with all due respect, that to get into some of these extraneous issues...it's very difficult for the panel to try to address them. I think the Commissioner has been clear here. I don't think he understands or knew what Ms. Mourani was talking about. If we could just focus on what the initial intention was...?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. MacKenzie. At these committees, I try to give a fair bit of leeway.

Madame Mourani is referencing a report. By the RCMP...?

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Yes, a report was produced by the RCMP, and throughout the document prostitution is defined as work. And so as a federal organization, I want to know whether it is the philosophy of the RCMP to consider prostitution as work, yes or no. It is a very simple question.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Elliott.

Commr William Elliott: Mr. Chairman, I think I've already answered the question in the affirmative.

The Chair: Yes.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: And so, according to the RCMP, prostitution is work. Is that right? I have understood you correctly?

[English]

Commr William Elliott: Yes, but I also said it's not legal work, and if the suggestion is that the RCMP somehow condones or approves of prostitution, nothing could be further from the truth.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Since you are speaking to me in English and I hear you in French, I want to make sure that I understand your comments correctly.

You are saying that for the RCMP prostitution is illegal work, is that correct?

Commr William Elliott: Yes, that was my reply.

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Mr. Elliott, in all of your career, have you ever experienced this type of situation before, or is this the first time? Have grievances ever been filed against you? Has anyone ever talked to you about your attitude? Is what happened at the RCMP new for you, or have grievances ever been filed against you in other departments where you worked?

[English]

Commr William Elliott: To my knowledge, there has never been a grievance filed against me throughout my career. Certainly in the course of working with other people issues arise with respect to how people, including me, are or are not getting along. But the short answer is no.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: So there have never been any grievances filed against you. That seems a bit strange to me, because I received emails from people who wish to remain anonymous, and who told me that grievances had already been filed against you, at Transport Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. I have other examples, if you would like more.

• (1555)

Commr William Elliott: Never, to my knowledge.

Ms. Maria Mourani: Never, to your knowledge.

Commr William Elliott: Never.

Mrs. Maria Mourani: I have another question for you, Mr. Elliott. Did you forbid Mr. Souccar from coming here? I was the one who asked that he appear before the committee, and we have

had no reply from him, which almost constitutes a refusal. Did you ask Mr. Souccar not to come here?

[English]

Commr William Elliott: I neither asked him to appear nor did I ask him not to appear. The committee, through the clerk, through the Department of Public Safety, through my parliamentary affairs folks—by the time things get to me, if they ever get to me, they are five or six times removed—had the suggestion that I might appear with Mr. Souccar. We responded that I proposed to appear with serving members of my senior executive committee. I believe that was communicated to the committee in writing by Public Safety on November 18.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: You never asked Mr. Souccar to not come here, and so we are going to ask him to appear. It does not bother you that we ask Mr. Souccar to appear before the committee? You have not given him an order preventing him from coming here, that is what you are telling us?

[English]

Commr William Elliott: There is no order from me telling him not to appear before the committee.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: According to you, was Mr. Souccar demoted in a certain way, or assigned to other duties? Had you been thinking for a long time of moving Mr. Souccar, or was it after what happened this summer that the decision was taken to remove him from his position?

[English]

Commr William Elliott: It was following the report from Mr. Morden. I met with Mr. Souccar and, following that, decided that he should no longer stay in his position. His position was deputy commissioner, federal and international policing.

The Chair: Thank you very much—

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Mr. Chair, I have another point of order. I would like Ms. Mourani to table the document she referred to.

The Chair: Madame Mourani, he made a suggestion that you were reading from a document there, and he is requesting that you table the document you've been reading from.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: No I was not reading a document. I said that I had received emails; that's not the same thing.

You are referring to human trafficking? Is that what you are talking about?

[English]

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Yes, and the e-mails she referred to—

Mrs. Maria Mourani: *Non.*

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Davies.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for being here today.

Commissioner Elliott, did you have any discussions with Deputy Chief Commissioner Souccar or former Assistant Commissioner McDonell about their attendance here today?

Commr William Elliott: No.

Mr. Don Davies: Okay.

Commissioner, there have been allegations about your management style being a challenge, at times, for the force. You yourself have acknowledged that while some challenges are inherent to the job and to your vision of where the force has to go—and I quote you—“there are some impediments that are personal to me”.

There have been allegations of there being an unhealthy level of tension in the force. I think the most pointed allegations were that you at times have been accused of being “verbally abusive” and “arrogant”—those are the quotes. I know you went down south for a management course. I’d like you to tell us, again, how much that cost the force.

Also, my question is, can you assure this committee and the rank-and-file RCMP officers that you are aware of some of the issues concerning your behaviour and that you’re committed to changing that? Also, tell us what concrete measures you’ve taken to deal with your challenges, if you acknowledge that there are indeed some.

Commr William Elliott: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Quite a number of questions have been asked, so let me try to address them all to the extent that I can remember them.

First of all, I am certainly aware that complaints were made and issues were raised with respect to my management style, for want of a better term. We have certainly, as a senior executive committee, talked about not only my style and how I conduct myself but how we can best work cohesively and cooperatively together. I am quite pleased with respect to the state of our relationships among the senior executive committee and the healthy level of discussion and debate.

With respect to reports in the media about my having attended a course with respect to interpersonal relationships, I wouldn’t describe it as a course. It was part of a broader initiative. We had a number of individuals who we hired on contract to provide advice to us with respect to transformational change at the RCMP. One of those was from a company called Malandro and is a very well-known expert in this field. I spent two or three days in Colorado with Ms. Malandro and some of her colleagues. She also—

• (1600)

Mr. Don Davies: Commissioner, I’m sorry to interrupt. I have limited time. I asked how much it cost.

Commr William Elliott: I believe the figure was \$44,000 Canadian.

Mr. Don Davies: Thank you.

Commissioner, leadership is linked with management structure, and you yourself have made some significant changes in personnel and reporting responsibilities. Last week, you made some proposals to alter the way that upper-level RCMP management is structured, and I want to explore that with you for a minute.

You proposed—and I’m going to quote you, if this is accurate—“to modernize the force and to change how it is that we are structured, to be more independent with respect to the administration of the force from government...”. Since you clearly propose to put a buffer between you and government, can you tell us what problems or issues you may have experienced in dealing with government that may have caused you to suggest that change?

Commr William Elliott: First of all, I would point out that the change I have recommended is not a new idea. It was actually one of the recommendations of the task force on governance and cultural change in the RCMP, and it has been endorsed by the Reform Implementation Council.

Generally speaking, I would say that the suggestion behind that recommendation, as I understand it, and it’s certainly my view, is that the current regime—which includes, for example, our having to go to Treasury Board multiple times a year for approvals, and also the fact that there are many policies adopted by the Treasury Board for government writ large—is not particularly responsive to a policing organization. Our desire is to have policies and oversight that are tailored to the realities of policing. Certainly we think that is a way to be more efficient.

Mr. Don Davies: As upper-level RCMP management, have you ever encountered or heard of any of your predecessors encountering any political interference from the ministry or the minister in the operations of the RCMP?

Commr William Elliott: No.

Mr. Don Davies: You also have commented, I think in your opening statements, on civilian oversight, particularly the complaints process against RCMP officers. You may know that many Canadians are calling for a civilian-administered process similar to the Ontario model so that police are not investigating police when there’s a serious allegation.

I’d like to know your views. Do you agree with that? If so, when can Canadians expect that we can have such a process implemented in this country?

Commr William Elliott: Okay. Well, the last part of the question, Mr. Chairman, should really be directed to governments and not to me. As I indicated in my opening remarks, questions about governance of the RCMP and certainly questions about how complaints are dealt with.... The RCMP certainly has an interest, but we are not the decision-makers.

We’re very supportive of independent investigations. We have gotten our own house in order by the adoption of our policy earlier this year on external investigations or review. That policy requires us to refer investigations of serious incidents to independent agencies where they exist. Unfortunately, they don’t exist in every jurisdiction across the country, which is why we’re also on record, as I said in my opening remarks, as urging governments to set up such independent agencies.

So if we could be completely relieved of the obligation—because it is an obligation—of investigations into our employees, I think that would be a good thing from the RCMP’s perspective, and certainly from mine personally. We have not been relieved of that obligation universally, which is why we have in place the policy that we have.

•(1605)

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

We'll move to Mr. MacKenzie.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Thank you, Chair.

I want to thank the panel for being here today.

Commissioner Elliott, you indicated the changes in governance. I would suggest to you that with the changes in governance—as municipal departments across Canada have—we wouldn't have a political body like this today, with you appearing before it for political reasons. I think that's the major significant difference that I would see.

I would also say, and you can respond to it, that policing is very much a paramilitary style of organization. Anybody who thinks that everybody is always thrilled with the guy at the top obviously hasn't lived in the organizations; that's just not the way they function. Frequently, people do have difficulty with people at the top. It doesn't mean that there's a problem; it means that it's a healthy organization that has and does tolerate that sort of dissent, but within the organization.

It's no different in policing than it is in private industry. Large companies go through the same kinds of things. So when we go through these kinds of things here, that's because there's a government body set up, as this one is here, I would suggest, as opposed to a civilian oversight that sees these things.

But to one of the deputy commissioners—perhaps Deputy Commissioner Nause—are you responsible for the grievance procedure within the organization now? Do I have the right person?

D/Commr Al Nause: No. Formerly, yes, I would have been, but with the reorganization of the structure, the professional integrity officer now oversees discipline and grievances.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Just extending that a little bit, has the force stayed constant in your time? Do different people end up in different positions for a variety of reasons—because of promotions, transfers, and professional development?

D/Commr Al Nause: I'm not sure I understand the question. But yes, there are different people who have been promoted into different positions.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: The organization is not static is what you mean—

D/Commr Al Nause: No, not at all.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: So because somebody's not doing the same job today that they did four months ago doesn't necessarily have any significance. It is as it is: the organization does change and it's not in a static position.

D/Commr Al Nause: No. That's exactly right. Generally speaking, in three to five years you can expect a move out of your position.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: And sometimes a lot less and sometimes a bit more.

D/Commr Al Nause: Exactly.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Okay.

Commissioner, this role that you're filling today is a huge role. It is a new one for you, I would say to anybody who's watching. Obviously, as I've said, the organization is paramilitary. Your background is not in the military and it's not in policing. It's a learning experience for the new commissioner and for the people who work with and under...?

Commr William Elliott: I would certainly agree that it's a learning experience.

I would say, though, that I still have a huge amount to learn, but I'm not sure I can any longer agree that it's a new position. By my count, I've been commissioner for three years, four months, and 12 days. I didn't actually count that until you asked the question.

Mr. Chairman, may I make just two very quick comments?

First of all, with respect to the potential for governance changes, I don't foresee significant changes with respect to the responsibilities of the Minister of Public Safety. I think his role and the role and interest of Parliament in its national police force will continue.

With respect to a paramilitary organization, even the military would say that you cannot run a modern organization by simply giving orders and expecting orders to be carried out—if you could ever do this. There is certainly a time and a place for the giving and carrying out of orders, but most of the time, in most of what we do, there is a requirement for good discussion and debate, and that is what I and my colleagues are very much trying to foster.

The Chair: Mr. MacKenzie.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: I think that was the point I was trying to make, Commissioner: there is always some healthy discussion within an organization. Others would call it dissent, but if you don't have that healthy discussion, you don't get the change that's required. Your organization is one that is going through that transformational change and you will have that discussion. I'm sure that's been going on for those three years and whatever months and hours you spoke of, but that's not unhealthy. That is a healthy part of change.

•(1610)

Commr William Elliott: I think it certainly can be very healthy. I would not say that all the discussion that has taken place has been healthy, but we're very much committed to trying to resolve that, and I think the best way to resolve issues is to have frank discussions.

I think my colleagues may wish to comment, but I'm quite confident that we're having frank discussions. Among my colleagues who are here or my other colleagues more broadly, certainly those on the senior executive and senior management teams, there is no shyness in speaking their minds, particularly when they don't agree with me.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: I never like that part of it, but I understand it.

The Chair: May I...? We do have a minute on Mr. MacKenzie's time. What is the RCMP doing, though, to bring leadership along, to be able to see people come up, with the idea that it can be developed...? Is leadership being developed any differently now than it was, let's say, five, six, seven, or eight years ago?

Commr William Elliott: Perhaps Deputy Nause, who's our chief human resources officer, is best placed to respond to that question, Mr. Chairman.

D/Commr Al Nause: Over the last couple of years we've appointed a leadership champion. We've developed a leadership development strategy, which establishes the continuum for leadership development and incorporates talent management, succession planning, coaching, mentoring, and both formal and informal learning opportunities.

We're identifying high-impact positions and the competencies required for each of those positions, then doing an environmental scan of our leaders of tomorrow and developing individualized learning plans for them. We have some innovative strategies. We've gone out with a request for a proposal on developing university management courses for some of our people.

We have a national performance program. We're looking at leadership from cradle to grave, so to speak. We're looking at the leadership behaviours we're fostering and encouraging at our cadet training in Regina. We're also looking at first-level supervisors, at giving them the proper skill sets to be able to develop their own leadership ability. Then we're looking at managerial development and training so that people can execute as well as obtain results.

As I outlined, we're also looking at executive talent and management, as well as specific training for our executives. What we want in the future is to have our leaders being developed from a very early stage right up through to the end of their careers.

The Chair: Thank you. We may come back to that.

Madame Folco.

[Translation]

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am very happy to hear what you have to say, Mr. Nause, concerning the big changes you are making within the RCMP.

I'd like to go back to one point. My colleagues put questions to the commissioner and the replies he gave did not really answer my own questions.

Mr. Commissioner, you did say that you had neither given permission nor forbidden the deputy commissioner, Mr. Souccar, from coming here before this House committee. Is that correct?

[English]

Commr William Elliott: Exact.

[Translation]

Ms. Raymonde Folco: I think it is fair to say that before he left the premises, at the RCMP, the deputy commissioner no longer had an office, he was working from home, he had no BlackBerry cell phone and was no longer receiving any information at all from the RCMP.

Do you have any comments to make on that?

Commr William Elliott: According to what I know, that is not the case. An office was available to him. There was a change, and he

is no longer in the same office. He does have a BlackBerry and has access to all of our information and communications.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: We were also told, Mr. Commissioner, that he is not here today because he was not even informed of this hearing. He did not even know that the RCMP had been invited to meet with us today.

● (1615)

[English]

Commr William Elliott: Well, I have reason to believe he is aware that we are here today. I have that second-, third-, or fourth-hand, but no, an invitation was not extended. As I say, my understanding is that the committee expressed interest in my attendance and Mr. Souccar's attendance. We responded that we proposed to have me attend, ultimately with my colleagues who are here, so.... To my knowledge, the RCMP did not communicate with Mr. Souccar about today's appearance.

[Translation]

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Thank you.

My next question is along the same lines. It does not pertain to Mr. Souccar directly.

We heard that several people had criticized your behaviour as RCMP commissioner. It was pointed out that when you announced promotions at the RCMP, none of the people who had criticized your behaviour had been promoted. Was that because these people ended their careers, or was it due to other factors?

[English]

Commr William Elliott: Well, I think as we've already ascertained, Mr. Chairman, from the comments of my colleague, Mr. Killam, I don't think we can rely on the media reports with respect to who made what criticisms. I will tell you that there was no consideration about promoting or not promoting people based on any real or perceived conflict with me or complaints about me.

I might also mention, Mr. Chairman, that the decisions with respect to promotions—and in some cases we had people change positions without promotion—were all done in consultation. They were not my decisions alone...well, I guess at the end I'm the commissioner, and the buck stops with me. But as is the case with how we have been doing promotions and assigning senior people—for regular members, that means chief superintendents, assistant commissioners, and deputy commissioners—we discussed those matters among the senior executive committee.

At no time, as I recall, colleagues, was there a discussion about not promoting anybody or promoting anybody based on complaints or concerns.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Thank you.

Thank you, Commissioner.

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Folco.

Mr. Norlock.

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

Thank you to the witnesses for appearing.

Commissioner, I do recall your first visit to our committee, and I do recall relating to you my experience in the OPP. My first commissioner was indeed a civilian. On that transition, after having our meeting, I did talk to some....and here I have to watch my language, but I refer to them as old farts from the old days, and they tell me that the transition usually is not really smooth, meaning to say that when someone is promoted from outside an organization, particularly when a civilian takes over a uniform, a paramilitary organization, there sometimes is resistance.

But after a while that resistance is diminished because, in my respectful opinion, in running an organization as large as the RCMP—or any police or paramilitary organization—there are certain corporate decisions to be made. You're running an organization, so there's the chain of command, but it does take some time. Not having had the privilege of depot, you need to get into the psyche of the RCMP, I think, and quite frankly, from a personal perspective, I think you're doing that very well.

But my question and comment are a result of many of the folks who will be watching today and their experience with municipal police forces. At a municipal level, you would never see what's happening here, because those personnel issues would be done behind closed doors. But that's the difference between Ottawa and how municipal police function.

Normally, as I said, these personality or personnel issues would be done in private, but this is Ottawa. It is highly politicized and highly politically charged and everybody is looking for an advantage. But my hope—and I believe it to be uniform here, hopefully—is that we all want you, the RCMP and you, to be the most successful police organization this nation has ever known, because we need to have that in this day and age.

My first direct question is to Deputy Killam. There was some discussion here about formalizing a complaint or grievance. I didn't know that senior management had a grievance process, but I guess there must be one. I suspect there isn't, but.... Number one, is there a grievance process, and, Deputy, have you ever enacted that grievance process? May I also ask you directly, if you did have an issue with the commissioner, how would you handle that or how does the organization believe it should be handled?

• (1620)

D/Commr Tim Killam: The grievance process is something that I can use for myself as well. I can tell you that in this situation, I've indicated that I was not part of a formal grievance in any way, shape, or form. The commissioner is a straightforward and sometimes blunt individual. We address each other in quite similar fashions, quite frankly, and we do it behind closed doors if we have differences of opinion. That's the way it should be, and that's the way it would be at the senior executive. That's the way we handle ourselves at the senior executive table. It's done in a professional, straightforward, frank way. Going outside of that is not useful for anyone—and in particular, the organization.

Mr. Rick Norlock: And I suspect you have at least 28 to 30 years of experience. Would that be pretty close?

D/Commr Tim Killam: I think you're a little bit off, a little bit behind the number. I have seven weeks left before I retire—35 years.

Mr. Rick Norlock: You have 35 years; I suspected that. Has there been any significant change over the last 10 or 12 years in that grievance process or in any of the normal relationships, shall we say, particularly in senior management?

D/Commr Tim Killam: I'm not sure I understand. I mean, I think it's essentially the same.

Mr. Rick Norlock: Have you changed any of the processes? Do they remain the same—

D/Commr Tim Killam: No.

Mr. Rick Norlock: Have the relationships between senior managers and the commissioner remained fairly well the same system?

D/Commr Tim Killam: Yes, they have, and quite frankly, there is the RCMP Act of 1988. It's enshrined in the RCMP Act as to how you go about a formal grievance. That has stayed the same.

Mr. Rick Norlock: Deputy Nause, if I remember correctly, in the Ontario Provincial Police—and it's been about 10 years since I've been involved there—part of the many duties of a manager is always to be mentoring his immediate subordinates, so that an immediate subordinate can take over his or her position. That is the whole process almost from the start to finish in that organization.

Does that differ in the RCMP?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Norlock.

D/Commr Al Nause: No, it doesn't. In both of the two programs that I talked about previously—the supervisor development program and the managerial development program—as well as in our recruit field training, they're actually hooked up with a mentor.

We've also implemented a mentorship program for the senior executives, along with the transformation knowledge booklet, so that if and when you're transferred out of a position—and we usually rotate every three to five years—you would have the key aspects of the job, or the burning issues, and be able to have that job knowledge transfer to the incoming replacement.

But it's just now that we're rolling out a mentorship program of some of the former commissioners and other people who can serve as role models for our senior executives, to help them make the transition as well.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Nause.

We'll now move to Monsieur Gaudet.

[Translation]

Mr. Roger Gaudet (Montcalm, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Whether a commissioner is a civilian or a former police officer is not the issue; what I would hope to see is transparency for Quebecers and Canadians. Up till now, the RCMP has proved nothing to us. I would like to know what its achievements are. Do not list 25 of them; two or three will suffice. I am not talking here about the internal management system you implemented nor of the fact that you appointed some people. I want you to tell us about the achievements of the RCMP.

[English]

Commr William Elliott: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We have achievements every day. We respond to approximately 7,500 calls for service from Canadians. Canadians tell us in overwhelmingly positive numbers that they approve of the services we provide. In our last core survey of those who have had direct dealings with the RCMP, 92% of those individuals said they got good service from the RCMP.

We have had notable successes in the province of Quebec in investigating and supporting prosecutions of organized crime groups, including Italian organized crime, biker gangs, and those involved in the illicit trafficking of drugs and tobacco.

We have had notable successes with respect to investigating and supporting successful prosecutions under the anti-terrorism provisions of the Criminal Code.

As well, Canadians and the world applauded the RCMP's security efforts with respect to the Olympic Winter Games and Paralympic Games.

I could spend literally hours, Mr. Chairman, talking about the successes of the RCMP.

• (1625)

[Translation]

Mr. Roger Gaudet: That's not what I mean. Answering the telephone is your main task on a daily basis. I'm talking here about achievements. The government asked you to investigate the Air India case in 1988, and we still have no answers. Nor do we have any answers regarding the sponsorship scandal. That is the type of thing I am asking you about, not about your work on a daily basis. I'm not asking you how many police officers you have; I want to hear about the achievements of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. I'm not referring to individuals. When a government entrusts a file to you, do you put it on a shelf somewhere? That is my question. I have no other.

Commr William Elliott: Are you talking about me personally, or about the RCMP in general?

Mr. Roger Gaudet: In referring to the RCMP, I am not talking about the employees who work in Nova Scotia but about you, the senior executives. What are your achievements? As I said, there was an investigation launched in 1988 on the Air India case. However the Royal Canadian Mounted Police discarded the documents. There was another in 2008, but there have been no results there either. Then there was the sponsorship scandal in 2003, and there have been no answers regarding that case either. It is from that perspective that I am talking about results and transparency. I am not talking about the fact that people call you to inform you that there have been thefts here and there: I am talking about the work that Parliament entrusts to you.

Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: There's one other thing—and I'm glad Mr. Elliott isn't going to go on for hours on the achievements—I would just refer you to his speech at the Canadian Club here in Ottawa. He spoke at great length about the achievements of the RCMP as well as some of

the things he mentioned in his presentation today in regard to recruitment and other things.

Mr. Elliott.

Commr William Elliott: Mr. Chairman, if I may, certainly I would direct the honourable member and the committee to the report with respect to our transformation initiatives, better supporting our employees, and providing better service to Canadians.

I am not at all suggesting that the RCMP doesn't still have huge room for improvement, and specifically with respect to the Air India investigation, certainly there were mistakes made. I would point out that those investigations, as problematic as they were, particularly in the early days, did lead to a successful prosecution, and there was a successful prosecution recently with respect to perjury in relation to the Air India case.

Transparency is certainly a very important concept, and we have taken a number of steps to increase transparency in the RCMP, including the policy that I mentioned on independent investigations or review.

The Chair: Thank you.

Madame Mourani, very quickly, please.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Mr. Killam, I am going to ask a very simple question.

Since you have known Mr. Elliott, have you ever heard him insult someone, use verbally abusive language when speaking to you or to anyone else in the organization, or display arrogance and a lack of availability? Please be very open with us, Mr. Killam.

[English]

Mr. Rick Norlock: Point of order, Mr. Chair—

The Chair: Mr. Norlock has a point of order.

I think we're going beyond really why we're called here today. To talk about the day-by-day activities of the RCMP, I'm not certain that is the reason that we've called these folks here today—

Mrs. Maria Mourani: *Monsieur le président*—

The Chair: —but I will hear Mr. Norlock's point of order.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Mr. Chairman, we are here—

[English]

The Chair: One moment—

Mr. Rick Norlock: Mr. Chair, if—

The Chair: Mr. Norlock.

Mr. Rick Norlock: Mr. Chair, if the member would just allow me to speak....

Mrs. Maria Mourani: *Allez-y.*

Mr. Rick Norlock: I did not interrupt her except to say that I had a point of order.

As I've previously stated in my questions, I didn't think that this committee asked the RCMP commissioner or his representatives to come here to talk about individual personnel issues.

However, if that's the case, if we're going to make accusations, then we have to name those individuals. If this is going to become, I don't know, some kind of witch hunt, we need to hear both sides of the story rather than hear that, well, there are some anonymous individuals and other individuals....

An hon. member: [*Inaudible—Editor*]

● (1630)

The Chair: We're already on a point of order.

I think it's taking it right to the limits, Madame Mourani, to be fair. The inside managerial style is one thing. To basically question another about behind-the-door meetings, to ask whether anyone was verbally abusive.... An answer to that would depend on what "verbally abusive" would even mean to you. In this committee, you may think that one member was verbally abusive to another, and yet to someone else it would not even come close to what you are suggesting. So I think it's open to an opinion, a interpretation, as to what your view of "verbally abusive" is.

I see that our clock is at 4:30. I want to thank each of you—
[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Mr. Chairman, you have been preventing me from speaking for a while now. How can that be? You are preventing me from asking my question. Mr. Killam did not answer me. I will make my question very simple.

Has Mr. Killam ever heard Mr. Elliott insult anyone?
[*English*]

The Chair: Madame Mourani, thank you for that.

Because you're going on and on, I'll tell you what did happen. What did happen was that I gave Mr. Gaudet too much time, so I was trying to be lenient and let you go over your time. You were well over your time limit. So with all due respect, I thank you.

I want to thank the commissioner, the deputies, and each one of you for appearing here today. We do appreciate your testimony and your frankness in your answers.

We are suspended. We'll come back and do committee business.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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