HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

SECU • NUMBER 066 • 1st SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Tuesday, January 29, 2013

Chair

Mr. Kevin Sorenson

Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

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● (0845)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC)): I call the meeting to order.

Good morning, everyone. This is meeting number 66 of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, on Tuesday, January 29, 2013. Before we get into welcoming our guests for today, I want to welcome our committee members back after a constituency break and winter break.

It's good to have each one of you here. It's also good to come back and to hit restart—or whatever we want to do—on this study that we've undertaken. We're going to continue our study on the economics of policing in Canada.

As one of our witnesses today we have, from the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, the assistant deputy minister, community safety and partnerships branch, Mr. Shawn Tupper.

Mr. Tupper, welcome.

We also have with us the director general of the policing policy directorate of the law enforcement and policing branch.

Mr. Potter, welcome back.

From the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, we have the deputy commissioner, east region, Mr. Steve Graham.

Our committee thanks our witnesses for helping us out with this study on the cost of policing in Canada.

I also want to say that this is really the second time that some of you have appeared before our committee. We began the committee in the midst of votes, I think, so that meeting was interrupted, and there were just other things that were happening in the life of the Parliament. I know that we were interrupted that day, so it's good to welcome you back. We very much look forward to what you have to say. We'll now turn the time over to Mr. Potter.

Welcome. We look forward to your comments.

Mr. Mark Potter (Director General, Policing Policy Directorate, Law Enforcement and Policing Branch, Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Good morning to everyone. It's good to be back here to talk to you about the important topic of the economics of policing. As noted last time we met, the economics of policing is about the evolution and sustainability of policing at a time of fiscal constraints and enhanced public expectations.

Although the Government of Canada is but one of the many partners involved in this issue, the Minister of Public Safety has been providing leadership. The minister introduced this issue this time last year at a meeting of federal, provincial, and territorial ministers of justice and public safety in Charlottetown. At that time, two next steps were agreed on: first, to share information on initiatives that have improved the efficiency and effectiveness of policing; and second, to convene a summit on the economics of policing.

Building on that, at the next FPT ministers meeting in Regina in October of 2012, it was further agreed that after the summit there would be consultations on the development of a shared forward agenda for policing in Canada.

I am pleased to say that there has been progress on all three steps, and I would like to update you today on that work.

The summit on the economics of policing was a Government of Canada event hosted by Minister Toews on behalf of all FPT ministers. It took place on January 16 and 17 in Ottawa. The summit included 30 speakers from Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand, as well as participants representing the policing community and other stakeholders in Canada.

The agenda for the summit was developed in cooperation with all governments and the three national policing associations in Canada. It was built around three pillars for reform: one, efficiencies within police services; two, new models of community safety; and three, efficiencies within the justice system.

In his welcoming address at the summit, Minister Toews made a number of key points. The minister referred, for example, to “a shift in public expectations”, and noted the following:

> A decade ago, the average Canadian readily accepted, almost without question, steady increases in police budgets.
>
> Today, however, there are increasing calls to demonstrate the value of the investments that all governments make in public services, including policing.
>
> And because policing performance measures are not well-developed, widely applied, or reported to the public, there is little clarity as to the efficiency and effectiveness of police spending.

The minister also outlined actions being taken to address those areas of policing for which the ministry is directly responsible. For example, the RCMP is implementing reductions in its annual funding through administrative and operational support reforms. In addition, with the passing of the Expenditure Restraint Act in 2009, federal salary increases, including those of RCMP members, have been held to 1.5% annually. It is expected that these key cost containment measures will help keep RCMP policing services sustainable in the future.

In concluding, the minister stated that police services face a couple of options: they can do nothing, and may eventually be faced with having to make cuts or significantly reduce the growth rate of police spending depending on the fiscal situation in their jurisdiction, or they can be proactive, get ahead of the curve, and have greater flexibility in designing and implementing both incremental and meaningful structural reforms in order to better serve Canadians.

Several of Minister Toews' points were reinforced by his provincial counterpart from B.C., Minister Bond, in her welcoming remarks. She stressed the importance of getting the best possible return on taxpayers' investments in policing, and of finding new and better ways of doing things, whether it's police service delivery, investigating and preventing crime, training or, most importantly, working together. That, she remarked, means challenging the status quo, which is never easy.

These remarks by the two ministers served to set the context and direction for the summit. Although the summit was but one step on a longer journey, it was a productive two days of informative presentations and frank dialogue. Comments from the participants and formal evaluations submitted by the attendees both confirmed that it was a constructive event that served to raise awareness, provide practical information, and help steer us on a path toward greater efficiency and effectiveness in policing through innovation and reform.

To continue the momentum, the three national police associations supported a strategic framework, or shared forward agenda. The shared forward agenda introduced at the summit by Public Safety Canada was based on discussions with other governments and will be developed collaboratively over the next several months.

As Minister Toews made clear in his opening remarks, no one party—certainly not the federal government—can buy the solution to the challenges the sector is facing, but together we can identify the necessary actions to support innovation and reform, and we can each take on certain responsibilities.

● (0850)

In that vein, it is encouraging to note that Ontario, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia have already agreed to champion the development of one of the three pillars of reform over the next few months.

Building on the summit discussions, the closing session also laid out potential areas to explore through a shared forward agenda. In terms of efficiencies within police services, these areas include strengthened civilianization, police service efficiency reviews, sharing and adoption of best practices, improved measurement and reporting, and enhanced research capacity and coordination.

In addition, actions under the second and third pillars of reform could include cataloguing and validating new community safety models and identifying and advancing policing priorities for justice reform. Clearly progress requires system-wide approaches.

As a result of the national dialogue launched through the summit, over the spring and summer of 2013 we will engage in a broad-based collaborative process to develop the shared forward agenda.

Another key FPT deliverable, the catalogue of initiatives from across Canada that improve the efficiency and effectiveness of policing, was also showcased at the summit.

We very much welcome the committee's interest in this issue. Your engagement will contribute to the dialogue that is under way and strengthen the momentum of reform necessary to sustain Canada's policing advantage.

Policing currently enjoys a large reservoir of public confidence that can be further replenished only if we are seen to be acting in a responsible manner, a manner that meets the challenge of constrained resources while striving to improve service through greater efficiency and effectiveness. This is the opportunity that can be seized through working together, tackling the issue from every angle, and fostering lasting change through long-term commitment.

That concludes my opening remarks. We would be very pleased to answer any questions.

Thank you very much.

● (0855)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll move into our first round of questioning. We'll go to Ms. Bergen for seven minutes.

Ms. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Potter.

Thank you as well, Mr. Tupper and Mr. Graham, for being here.

There is so much to dig into here.

Mr. Potter, could you begin by telling us again what those three pillars are? I know you mentioned one of the pillars was being adopted.

Mr. Mark Potter: The first of the three pillars we have identified as the basis for the development of the forward agenda is efficiencies within police services themselves. Those are actions most directly within the control of the police service itself.

The second pillar is new models of community safety. These are new approaches we've seen across Canada and in other places around the world whereby you work with other partners—whether they involve social agencies, education, housing, or so on—to take integrated approaches to deal with crime and get at the root of criminality and put people and families on different trajectories to avoid having them become criminals in the future.

The third is efficiencies within the justice system. There are numerous examples of cases in which, as a result of procedural and other requirements that flow from the justice system, costs, time, and complexity are imposed on police services, ultimately increasing costs. We will be looking at those and identifying where there might be opportunities to streamline and make the justice system more efficient.

Ms. Candice Bergen: Have you been able to identify specific examples in which each one of those pillars has been performed and a best practice has been established—for example, in new models of community safety? I'm sure you're aware of what's going on in Calgary, where they seem to be doing this quite well, so I would think they would be a good example of that pillar.

Regarding efficiencies within policing or efficiencies within the justice system, are we able to identify who's doing those well so that we can take their example and duplicate it?

Mr. Mark Potter: We are and we aren't. There are two challenges here. One is sharing of best practices. If you have something that works, tell other people about it, and provide that information so others can learn.

The other is a deeper challenge, which is evidence-based research. That validates that these models actually work and are achieving the outcomes you are striving to achieve.

In Canada, certainly the view coming out of the summit was that our research capacity is limited, that it could be strengthened, that there is an opportunity to provide a little more coordination with respect to the research priorities of Canadian academics and researchers to be able to support policing and justice reform and so on. Research is quite fundamental as the foundation for further reform and innovation, but as I mentioned at the outset, in practical terms there are a lot of good examples in Canada and around the world of things that police are currently doing that are making a real difference. It's a question of ensuring that those best practices are shared and that police learn from one another.

Mr. Shawn Tupper (Assistant Deputy Minister, Community Safety and Partnerships Branch, Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness): If I may, just from the community safety perspective, if you look at that broader spectrum and go beyond a policing lens when you look at crime prevention and activities that we can pursue in the community to create safer communities, we actually are starting to build a very good evidence base in Canada. We have been looking at models from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, and we're bringing those models to Canada and testing them through the national centre for the prevention of crime.

We are actually building a very good set of data that is Canadian, which is a good thing, and we are very much, in the design of the program, looking at elaborating on best practices and, equally, trying to test models that don't work so that people aren't investing their money in a bad way.

We also do a lot of publishing around best practices from a community safety perspective that focuses on early intervention and diversion.

● (0900)

Ms. Candice Bergen: One of the challenges, for example, is that in provinces where municipalities or small cities have their own police force and they're funding it, those costs seem to be really high, yet there are reasons they keep their own municipal or small-town police force.

Is it true, then, that part of the challenge is identifying not only best practices but best practices that are transferable between urban and rural and different settings? We're obviously a vast country with a vast population and a lot of diversity, including aboriginal policing.

Mr. Shawn Tupper: It's always the danger in talking about data from a Canadian perspective and throwing out those averages, because they don't really tell the whole story about what's going on in the north or what's going on in remote communities on the prairies. Indeed we are trying to understand that data from those particular perspectives. We look at things in terms of the size and location of the community and the kinds of crime going on there. We try to focus our investments so that they are more specific.

Frankly, the necessary approach—and I think we see this across the whole social system—is to understand the variety of challenges and then address those challenges specifically.

Ms. Candice Bergen: In terms of being able to disseminate this information and make it useful to the jurisdictions that want to use it, is it the goal to be able to continue to have these summits and to be able to show provincial police departments—for example, to the RCMP, as we are already doing federally—ways they can tighten things up, ways they can make things better? It seems that one of the challenges, too, is to get the information out and have people know how to actually use it.

Is that the goal, and how close are we? You talked about the national centre for the prevention of crime and where this research is coming from. How close are we, or where are we in that process, in terms of actually having a coordinated effort to give police departments or municipalities practical ideas on how to save money?

Mr. Shawn Tupper: On the crime prevention side, I think we're actually very close to that collaborative goal. We work extremely closely with the provinces and municipalities to first of all ensure that we're not duplicating our investments. The one thing we want to avoid, with limited money across the board, is all spending on the same thing. We actually have a very good linkage with other orders of government. I think it has really improved our ability to make those kinds of investments from the non-policing side.

The thing we need to do a better job of is incorporating what we learn in crime prevention, which isn't always police-based—we do a lot of work in schools, for instance—and linking that into the policing lens and making sure we get the biggest bang for those bucks.

On the summit side....

The Chair: Please be very quick.

Mr. Mark Potter: Essentially what we're going to be doing over the next six months is figuring out how we can work jointly and where it makes sense to combine our efforts as both governments and associations working with police services. Development of best practices, cataloguing, coordination of research—these are all issues being explored.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We will now move to Mr. Garrison for seven minutes, please.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Thank you very much.

I want to welcome back all of the members of the committee. We're looking forward to working together with everyone here.

I have to start by saying that I feel like we've been placed in a bit of a catch-up position as members of the committee. I think it's unfortunate that the members of the committee weren't included, at least as observers, in the summit. I think we all, on all sides, feel that we've just received a big block of information that was dropped on us. It might have put us in a better position had we been included. That, of course, is not your purview, those of you who are here today.

I have a question on whether the materials presented at the summit will be shared with the committee. You've made some references to the papers presented by the various presenters. Will those papers be shared with the committee? We made a request to the minister to have those materials, and we've not had a response.

Mr. Mark Potter: We're going to be talking to the various presenters who were at the summit. We will be exploring with them the possibility of putting their material online.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Yes, because I think it would be useful for all of us in the committee to be able to have a look at those materials as we move forward, and particularly in this study.

The second thing I have to say is, again, that perhaps what we really needed today was to have the minister here, because what you've put forward as these three pillars seems to contradict a lot of things that have been happening in the area of public safety, I believe, on the part of the government, so it's difficult for me to ask you those questions. We've seen cutbacks in resources for the front end of policing, which I believe is quite often where we reduce ultimate costs. We have those things in crime prevention and those kinds of enforcement activities. We've seen a tendency towards shedding those federal responsibilities and a downloading of those to municipalities.

Also, unfortunately, in the opening remarks of the minister I thought we saw—maybe it was just a media emphasis—an overemphasis on police salaries and a blaming of police as the cost drivers in public safety, but again, without the minister here, it's difficult to see.... The optimist in me says that perhaps we're seeing the government chart a new course here in public safety, and I would certainly very much like to see that, but it's really not something we can ask you.

There is one thing I can ask you. We spoke to first nations police chiefs about the summit. Before the summit, they had not been invited. I guess my question is based on the idea that first nations need to be included as full partners in everything we're doing here. Were first nations policing forces invited to the summit? Were they present at the summit?

● (0905)

Mr. Mark Potter: Absolutely. I think approximately 10 or 11 first nations police chiefs attended the summit. In developing the invitation list for the summit, we worked very closely with all provincial and territorial governments as well as the three main national policing associations. In that regard, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police made some very helpful recommendations in terms of the chiefs to invite, and in particular, those from the first nations community.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Okay.

I have some very specific questions I want to ask about your opening remarks. I'll turn to those.

When you talk about efficiencies within the police services, I wonder how that relates to the statement in the minister's opening remarks that raised the question of who does what and the increasing civilianization. I wonder if you could say more about that, because I know there are some concerns in policing that it is seen as a kind of simple and easy solution to simply pass duties on to civilians rather than to uniformed police. Were there presentations on this at the summit?

Mr. Mark Potter: Yes, there were. Let me take that question from a couple of angles, if I may.

The first is recognizing, of course, the jurisdictional responsibilities for policing in Canada. It's not the role of the federal government to be telling provincial and municipal police services how to organize themselves and how to optimize their efficiency. That's the first response.

The second response is that we've seen countless examples around the world and in Canada of police services that have used civilianization extremely effectively. These range from the fairly routine basic functions that you can sometimes civilianize to much more specialized functions such as crime analysis and forensics, where it makes sense to have highly trained civilian individuals doing that work. However, I think it's a question of finding the right mix for a particular police service, given its objectives and given its community priorities.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thank you.

Mr. Tupper made remarks about crime prevention. One of the concerns that we have had on this side of the table is that in the last round of budget cuts, there seems to have been a reduction in the federal support for anti-gang funding for police forces across the country. I wonder how we square the reductions that have come in those areas with this new direction that seems to be indicated here.

Mr. Shawn Tupper: In fact, my program has not been cut through the deficit reduction exercise and whatnot. In fact, the national centre was protected against cuts, for the very reason that we want to maintain those programs. Since 2008, in fact, up until last year, we're actually getting more money out the door.

That's not necessarily a government issue—it was actually a program issue—but we are now getting more money out the door through that program than we have in almost a decade.

Mr. Randall Garrison: On efficiencies within the justice system, I wonder if you could say a few words about any presentations you heard or any initiatives from the government about efficiencies within the justice system. Again, we've seen a lot of legislation coming before the House that would seem to me to place a lot more burden on the justice system rather than reducing those costs. Was there anything presented that you could talk about today?

Mr. Mark Potter: There was a session on justice efficiencies. In that, they explored some of the requirements that are imposed on policing. In this realm there's a recognition that it's not the policing community leading change; it's the policing community that wants to be engaged in the process of change.

A number of initiatives happening nationally and provincially are looking at the efficiency and the accessibility of the justice system. It's a question of factoring in police perspectives during those deliberations and that analysis so that you get the full picture of the impacts of the justice system on policing and you can take decisions on that basis.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Okay. Thank you very much.

● (0910)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll move back to Mr. Hawn, please, for seven minutes.

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to all the witnesses for being here.

I'd like to talk about the funding side for just a second, because there have been suggestions that funding to the front line has been cut. You addressed the one issue of gangs, for which funding, in fact, it has not been cut. We're getting more money out the door in that area. Could you comment on funding in general, specifically the funding of front-line policing?

Mr. Shawn Tupper: I can speak only to the aboriginal policing program that I run.

That program was protected under the deficit reduction plan. In the dictatorship of math, there was a $1 million reduction in the program, but frankly, that was nothing in a $120 million program. Essentially that funding has been maintained at a stable level, and it gets out the door every year, so from the perspective of the first nations policing program, we have maintained the funding and it is getting out the door.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Mr. Potter, can you comment more broadly?

Mr. Mark Potter: Absolutely.

Certainly policing hasn't been cut. In the last 10 years, we've seen police expenditure in Canada rise from $6 billion to $12 billion. The situation is one of looking at those costs and ensuring that the money is being spent as efficiently and effectively as possible. We can't speak to provincial and municipal police budgets, but in terms of the RCMP budget, as was mentioned, that has been reduced with a focus on administrative and operational support areas.

The last point I'd make is that the whole point of this process and the summit is to get ahead of the point that other countries such as the U.K. and the U.S. are at, where they're being forced, due to fiscal realities, to make fairly drastic cuts to policing. The goal here is to essentially give police services the opportunity to make well-considered adjustments to the new fiscal environment so that we're not in the situation of making stark cuts to both budgets and police officers.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Thank you.

Deputy Commissioner Graham, how are you coping with being more efficient regarding recruiting and training, which, I would suggest, are the lifeblood of any military or paramilitary organization like the RCMP?

Deputy Commissioner Steve Graham (Deputy Commissoner, East Region, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): Do you mean specifically with regard to training?

Hon. Laurie Hawn: I mean training and recruiting. Is there an impact on recruiting as well?

D/Commr Steve Graham: There is an impact on recruiting inasmuch as the numbers coming in the front door are not as high as they were, but those are driven more by demographics, service demand, and so on.

As you know, the emphasis has been on cost reduction with regard to administrative efficiencies and re-engineering services. I believe Deputy Commissioner Cabana or someone from his office is coming before the committee to talk about federal policing and some of the re-engineering there. We have, of course, the lab system. Forensic science is re-engineering itself and reorganizing. Internally a lot of administrative services, such as compensation and so on, are being re-engineered. We're going from having different sites across the country to having one site in order to take costs out of the system.

On the operational side, new technologies are being deployed. Things like traffic tickets involve a very basic system. It's now fully electronic in some jurisdictions, from the car right through the entire system, including the registry of motor vehicles, the court system, and everything, so it takes out a lot of human intervention and cost.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Thank you for that.

I'll go back to Mr. Potter. There's been some suggestion that people are blaming the police. Can you tell me what the component is? Do you know what the salaries component is as a portion of the overall budget?

Mr. Mark Potter: It typically varies to some degree, but human resources represent in the range of 80% of police service budgets. I think the perspective one should have on that is that it's mostly about getting the most out of that salary envelope.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: That goes back to some of the things that Deputy Commissioner Graham was talking about—making the system more efficient, and so on.

You mentioned other countries. Are there other countries that we specifically should look at or should not look at as examples of things we might try?

Mr. Mark Potter: In particular, there are certainly a number of countries, such as the U.K. and the U.S., that we should both look at and draw certain lessons from, whether good or bad, based on the experiences we've seen. There's a lot of experimentation happening in the U.K. with new service models, use of new technologies, new approaches to tiered policing, and so on. They're not all perfect and we shouldn't necessarily rush to embrace them, but there are certainly things we can learn and benefit from and consider applying to our own police services.

However, it's really at the discretion of individual police services themselves to draw on those lessons as they see fit. Part of the challenge of developing a strategy and part of the role of governments, both federal and provincial or territorial, is to facilitate that process by providing information and research that will help those police services make sound decisions.

● (0915)

Hon. Laurie Hawn: You mentioned the U.K. A lot of the things we do come from their traditions and practices and so on.

Could you comment on their system, which obviously is a geographically small area that doesn't have the provincial system we have, and the challenges of implementing something that we might get from the U.K. across Canada, for example?

Mr. Mark Potter: Yes, we can certainly look at the U.K. from many different aspects. Their overall numbers in terms of number of police officers per 100,000 population are actually quite high, and their spending per capita is actually quite high, so there was, I think, some scope in the U.K. to improving efficiency.

In U.K. police spending budgets over the last 10 to 15 years, you've seen very dramatic increases that actually outpaced our own, so I think they're retrenching there. We're seeing significant cuts that the central government is bringing out, in the range of 15% to 20% cuts to policing in the U.K., with significant impacts on front-line officers and on policing numbers generally.

Many police services are exploring a whole range of tools, whether technology, civilianization, outsourcing, or tiered policing, to try to manage those cuts in a way that preserves a high level of service to their community and minimizes the impact on the front lines to the greatest extent possible, but quite a transformation is happening in the U.K. right now.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Okay.

To Deputy Commissioner Graham, with technology come new forms of crime. We're always trying to stay one step ahead, obviously. How are we doing on that with respect to new-technology crime?

D/Commr Steve Graham: I think the Internet has been very empowering for society generally, and with it come different types of crime, whether it's Internet fraud, Internet-facilitated fraud, or something as tragic as child exploitation. It's certainly changing the dynamic in how we allocate resources and the kind of training required for people to be technologically savvy in order to do those kinds of investigations. It's changing the dynamic quite a bit, and we're recognizing that change throughout the system in how we train and develop officers. The demand currently is outstripping capacity, but we're working hard to catch up.

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

We'll now move to Mr. Scarpaleggia, please, for seven minutes.

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

I would like to affirm what my colleague said about invitations not being forthcoming to the opposition critics.

I imagine you had academics there from universities, or...?

Mr. Mark Potter: Yes.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: It would have been very instructive. As a matter of fact, I read about the summit as it was taking place, and I thought it would be quite interesting to be part of that, to be listening and to take in the information.

You were saying that policing costs have gone from $6 billion to $12 billion in Canada—over what period, again?

Mr. Mark Potter: It was about the last 10 years.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: It was the last 10 years. That's an incredible increase. It reminds me a little bit of the galloping increases in health care costs and how this has been as a result of many factors, some demographic—for example, the aging population—and the introduction of new and complex technologies and so on and so forth.

Often we hear—and we've been hearing this for a number of years with respect to health care—that all we need to do is bring about some administrative efficiencies and we will keep our costs down. Today there is a realization, if you've read Jeffrey Simpson recently—he's just written a book on the subject of health care in Canada, but this is specifically in relation to an article he published recently—that this is not the road to bringing down health care costs. We've tapped that possibility as much as possible.

I'm wondering, then, how much room is there for saving as a result of administrative efficiencies when you have more complex crimes, especially in the area of white-collar crime, which I am told needs more resources within the RCMP. It's extremely complex. You have highly technological crimes that require highly trained individuals. The investigations are more complex, and so on and so forth.

As well, you have the problem across the board, not just with the RCMP, of very high policing costs due to high police pensions. As a matter of fact, when we talk about the problem in the United States, from what I gather, the impetus for looking at bringing down policing costs has been the result of huge pension liabilities. In some communities, the whole municipal budget goes to pension liabilities.

I must say that I'm sure there are some administrative efficiencies to be had, but I just don't see how you can solve a $12 billion problem just by so-called back office improvements. I would like your comments.

● (0920)

Mr. Mark Potter: Thank you.

I think the challenges are multi-layered. The first is we don't often know how efficient most police services are because we have a measurement challenge. There are a range of indicators that can be helpful. Any one indicator in isolation often gives you mixed or ambiguous information, so you have to be cautious in how you use it and you want to look at a range of indicators. That's on the quantitative side.

Then you begin to look more deeply into police work and realize there's a whole qualitative side to policing that is not easily captured by typical measurements. It's a real challenge to open up the box, look inside the police service, and figure out how efficient and effective it is. We've seen programs in the U.K., for example, in which private sector specialists come in and work with you to look at all of your processes, look at each officer's daily routines, and break them down into what they're doing basically every minute of the day. They look at all of those steps. Having done that, they assess possible areas in which efficiency can be increased, and often what they find are fairly straightforward things.

A lot of policing is about demand management. Whether it's calls related to crimes or calls for service, you're managing the demands that residents place on the police services, so it's about how you do that as efficiently as possible: how you prioritize those calls, how you use things like scheduling for non-urgent calls, how you use technology—mobile technology, for example—and how officers in the field are better able to respond to those calls.

Once you do that assessment, you're in a much better position, having looked in a very detailed way at a police service, to recommend how you might improve the efficiency.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Basically, you're saying we need more outside consultants to provide advice on how to save money. We know that often when we bring in outside consultants in any scenario, we end up spending more, but I agree that they will probably see areas in which cost savings can be made.

“Civilianization” is a new term. I'm not familiar with it. Civilianization—is that what it is?

Mr. Mark Potter: Yes.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: It sounds to me as though it means one of two things. It means taking some of the services that are performed in-house by police forces and essentially contracting them out to outside specialists. Again, the state will still be spending money, except it will be spending on outside contractors, and sometimes that doesn't save that much money.

Is there another element of trying to download costs onto the civilian population? In other words, are we saying, “Create more neighbourhood watch groups, and we won't have to patrol as much”, and so on?

In terms of demand management, I think if you speak to any citizen who's witnessed a break-in or whose house alarm has gone off or what have you, they'll say they didn't call the police because it takes them so long to get here and so on. Whenever they do come and take a report, they say—and this is just anecdotal—“Look ma'am, it's really going to be hard to find this person. It's like a needle in a haystack”, and so on.

It seems to me there's a sort of pent-up demand for policing services, so I don't think there's a lot reduction of demand to be had. I just think the system's overwhelmed. That's what citizens seem to be saying to me.

I'm really curious about the jurisdictional aspect of policing. We say policing is a provincial jurisdiction unless we're talking about the RCMP, and yet we have all kinds of federal programs and crime prevention, and the government—

The Chair: Mr. Scarpaleggia, we're well over our seven minutes already.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Okay. Well, I appreciate your patience.

The Chair: Thank you for your enlightening talk, though.

Go ahead, Madame Lefebvre.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Gentlemen, I would like to thank you for being here today.

This study is extremely important. It gives us some clarification on the direction we want to take and what to do to straighten all this out. I should say that this is an important national issue.

I'm in favour of looking at where we can save and where the money needs to be put so that this is as effective as possible. We all want our police forces to be as effective as possible, with the best possible budgets.

Mr. Potter, you've probably heard about the Police Officers Recruitment Fund, which is going to end in March 2013. In Quebec, it was used to fight street gangs. Four years ago, joint squads were formed to that effect. It worked incredibly well. Positive results were seen in the first year, and at a lower cost because these were joint squads that travelled from town to town. So fewer police were used to do a larger job over a broader territory. It worked extremely well.

Now, we are unfortunately stuck because this recruitment fund is going to be discontinued. The joint squads for fighting street gangs, which worked well, are unfortunately not going to receive any more funding. I think that's a problem.

When a program is effective, could we not invest the money and use it as an example instead of getting rid of it? Could we not use this type of program nationally with another type of fund?

● (0925)

Mr. Mark Potter: Thank you very much.

[*English*]

I think you're referring to the police officers recruitment fund, which was a program initiated in 2008. From the outset that was announced as a one-time investment to support provincial and territorial police recruitment efforts. I understand that the minister has conveyed on more than one occasion to his provincial and territorial colleagues that the government currently has no intention of continuing that program.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: It's extremely unfortunate. So, in your opinion, there is no alternative. For Quebec, it meant about $92 million over five years. We're talking about $400 million nationally.

This part of the program worked well. I don't want to insinuate that other parts of the police forces don't work as well, far from it. But was the functioning of these programs, namely this partnership with several towns, not raised during the summit? Was it mentioned that it could be a good example, that it might be necessary and that it had been requested by the police forces?

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Potter: That particular initiative was not specifically referred to at the summit, but I think the more general question relates to the fiscal constraints faced by both the Government of Canada and all governments in Canada to a considerable degree. Much of the point of the economics of policing summit and the development of that issue and getting ahead of that issue is to recognize fiscal reality and recognize that the answer is not necessarily putting more money into policing but instead taking the considerable amount of money that's currently invested in policing and finding ways to use it as efficiently and effectively as possible.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: I agree with you; we must use this as effectively as possible.

You mentioned some examples that we should or should not follow, but you didn't delve too deeply into it. You mentioned the United Kingdom and the United States. What approaches are these countries taking that you would not want to have here? For example, we often hear about privatization in the United States. Is that a direction we want to take or are we reluctant to adopt that approach?

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Potter: Thank you.

As I mentioned earlier, I think it's not the role of the federal government to tell police services across Canada what they should do in terms of specific programs and how they should approach improving their efficiency and effectiveness. I think our role is facilitative: providing them with information, sharing best practices, providing tools that will help them to make that decision with their communities and their residents as they see fit.

In terms of your broader point about what can we learn from other jurisdictions, I think there is a tremendous amount we can learn from other jurisdictions, whether it comes to structures to support policing or to individual actions within policing.

Your colleague a moment ago was asking about civilianization. Civilianization is not a new phenomenon. It's been in policing for a very long time. We have about 69,000 sworn police officers in Canada. We have about 30,000 civilian staff working in police services directly with them. It's a question of basically looking at the skill sets of the different individuals and applying them as efficiently as possible. A person trained to be a sworn police officer has certain skills, often to deal with a tremendous range of challenges and problems in the field, but that doesn't necessarily make them an IT expert, for example.

● (0930)

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

I have a couple of questions.

First of all, I want to comment on Mr. Scarpaleggia's statement at the beginning about the opposition critics not being invited to the conference. To make it clear, I don't think the government was invited either. As far as the invitation list is concerned, it was something that was worked out with the provinces and with all levels of government.

Also, the challenges of moving in 10 years from a $6 billion budget to $12 billion budget for policing have been brought out here, and the challenges of just how we can keep some of these costs in line but still maintain protection of society as a guiding principle for all this. I'm wondering, as we begin this report, if there is some way that you could brief us a little bit about the process in allocation dollars. We understand that we have a role as a federal government, but we also know that a lot of this can fall under provincial jurisdiction.

What is the process? As we decide to send money to the provinces, be it the RCMP or municipal policing, can you give our committee a bit of an idea? Is it based on per capita? What is the consideration for geography, for rural areas or large areas to police over? Where do “case calls” come in, if we can use that term? How is this allocation of funds divvied up?

I think that's maybe part of what Mr. Scarpaleggia was asking as well when he at the end talked about jurisdictions.

Mr. Mark Potter: Thank you.

I think there are a few layers to this aspect. There are the overall budgets that often are driven by the fiscal situation in a particular jurisdiction, as well as things like collective agreements that have been reached with police officer associations, which have been an important factor in those budgets.

For example, let's look at the City of Toronto. Over the past two years Toronto has been going through quite a challenging situation with their city budget being reduced. As part of that, the city has been working with its Police Services Board, which has been working with the police service to try to find efficiencies and to try to find savings. They look at the whole range of their operations and how they can improve efficiency, trying to do that and meet the broader city financial objectives. That's an ongoing process within Toronto.

As you go deeper within a police service—and Steve could speak much better to this than I can—you find resource allocation models that most police services like the RCMP have that allow you to rationally determine how many police officers you need in a particular location at a particular time. Those are fairly sophisticated models that they use, and they look at a whole range of factors to help them make those decisions.

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Ms. Bergen.

Ms. Candice Bergen: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to go back to the police officers recruitment fund. I think it's important for all of us around the table to be very clear what the police officers recruitment fund was, how it was communicated, and how it was used.

It was announced by our government that there would be $400 million for police recruitment across the country. Is that correct?

Mr. Mark Potter: Yes.

Ms. Candice Bergen: Was it made clear at the time to all jurisdictions that this was a temporary fund, or was it ever indicated that this was permanent money?

Mr. Mark Potter: It was communicated as a one-time investment.

Ms. Candice Bergen: Then it was up to the jurisdictions, including the City of Montreal, as to whether they were going to set up a permanent program or a temporary program, correct?

Mr. Mark Potter: The discretion as to how they use those funds to meet their policing needs was at the discretion of the province and territory.

Ms. Candice Bergen: It was their decision, so when they took the money and assumed that it would be permanent, that was their error in judgment. That was not a miscommunication by this government.

Mr. Mark Potter: I think the government was clear, when it announced the program, that it was a one-time investment.

Ms. Candice Bergen: Everybody else across the country got that. They understood that. Correct? I think so. Thank you very much.

I want to ask you another question. One of the programs that works really well in Manitoba, including in Portage la Prairie in my riding, is the citizens on patrol program, which is a really good example of.... What was the term?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: It's “civilianization”.

Ms. Candice Bergen: Yes. This has been going on for 20-some years, so it's actually not that new.

Is that something that was discussed at all during the summit? Has it worked in other provinces? As I said, in Manitoba it works very well, but I know that when I was in Alberta, there seemed to be a struggle to get things off the ground and organized.

Can you talk a little bit about that program?

● (0935)

Mr. Mark Potter: It's a model that's been pretty widely used.

I'd make a distinction here between civilianization and what is typically referred to as tiered policing, which refers to engaging individuals to carry out different and often more basic functions than what a typical police officer would do. Let's take, for example, the U.K., where they have a fairly robust tiered policing framework in place: there are the sworn police officers, who are the majority of the staff; there is the civilian staff within the police service, who often carry out administrative and support functions; and then there are two other categories of police personnel.

The first is what they call police community safety officers. These are individuals who are very engaged in the neighbourhood and the community—understanding their needs, gathering information, and working to solve problems. That is one other level.

The other one is exactly the one you referred to, which is volunteers. They call them special constables in the U.K. We have them in Canada, too. Different police services use them to varying degrees, but they can often be a very helpful resource for meeting policing needs and meeting the needs of the communities in terms of visibility and some of the more basic functions you don't necessarily want to have a fully sworn officer carrying out.

Ms. Candice Bergen: I've heard them described as the eyes and ears of the police officers.

Going back to the training costs associated with policing, could any of the three of you talk about how training costs vary? For example, one of the cost savings in provinces that take advantage of RCMP contracts is in training costs. Municipalities that have to train their own police bear those costs themselves. Can you talk about the difference between having an overall federal training program, such as in the RCMP, compared to, for example, the City of Winkler, in my community, which recruits and trains its own police?

D/Commr Steve Graham: In terms of basic training, a certain percentage goes back to the jurisdictions, to the provinces, that pay a share of those costs. In terms of training generally—ongoing general police training, re-qualification for firearms, use of force, supervisory training, and so on—those, again, are costs that are sourced back to the particular function the individual is coming from. There is a whole apparatus working behind the scenes that allocates those costs on a percentage basis at agreed-to percentages covered under the agreement.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll move to Monsieur Rousseau.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rousseau, you have five minutes.

Mr. Jean Rousseau (Compton—Stanstead, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

My question is for Mr. Potter or Mr. Tupper.

What might the repercussions be of the new orientations of your study, particularly with respect to remote police forces? For example, I'm thinking of the Canada Border Service Agency officers, who carry out police-related duties at customs and are already heavily burdened by their daily tasks. How will it apply at the border?

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Potter: I'm not in a position to answer that. I think the CBSA would be able to give you more information on what they have been doing in terms of efficiency improvements and operational reviews.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Rousseau: The 2012-2013 budget already includes budget cuts of several hundreds of millions of dollars for the Canada Border Services Agency and the RCMP. Given that employer-employee labour relations are already very difficult in this situation, how do you think these reforms will be received on the ground? How are you going to implement savings, whether they're economies of scale or computerizing this or that service when, let's be frank, police officers are already seriously shaken by these reforms and cutbacks?

● (0940)

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Potter: I'm afraid I'm not in a position to comment on CBSA cuts or reforms that might be under way. I just don't have that information.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Rousseau: If this study is done, regardless of the direction it's given, there will be repercussions on the ground. What are we going to tell the people on the ground? What will we do for their morale? We are talking about savings, but these are human beings, people who work in the field. And all these people should be represented at the table.

As we know, employees are more efficient when they are proud of what they do. But how are you going to establish a healthy relationship in order to make this more efficient? I don't see this anywhere here.

[*English*]

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Potter.

Mr. Mark Potter: Thank you.

Yes, I think that's a very important issue. The involvement of all aspects of the policing community in reforms is absolutely essential if you want to bring about lasting change, so in organizing the summit, we worked very closely with the three main national policing associations, including the Canadian Police Association, which represents front-line officers. Their president and their members were very much involved in the planning of the summit, in the dialogue at the summit, and in raising important issues.

There were also some interesting discussions among, for example, academics who looked at reform efforts both in the U.S. and the U. K. Their studies have indicated that in many instances front-line police officers were not engaged in developing reforms, in scoping out how you can improve efficiency. That was often the reason the changes didn't succeed, so that's an important element that you need to build into the program.

Another example is that when they're looking at doing efficiency reviews in the U.K., they realize they need to have the front-line officers directly involved in that process, not only to get their perspective but to build a capacity for continuous improvement. It's through that engagement that you can bring about lasting change.

The Chair: You have one minute, sir.

Mr. Jean Rousseau: I have one minute.

[*Translation*]

I would simply like to make one comment.

When I speak with people in the field, either RCMP officers or Sûreté du Québec officers, they often tell me that administrative duties make up such a large part of their daily tasks that they no longer have time for prevention work on the ground. How will this be addressed in the study?

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Potter: Absolutely. I think that's an essential element, as well as breaking down their tasks and asking if that's adding value. Is that contributing to the safety of the community? Could that officer be doing other things that are more useful?

Mr. Jean Rousseau: Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Rousseau.

[*English*]

Mr. Leef, you have five minutes.

Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and welcome to our witnesses.

I want to go back over a few things, because we tend to hear generalized comments being made that the opposition members hope will stick. I think it's important that we reiterate a few of those and clarify a couple of points before I get to the questions.

We heard a little bit earlier that there's concern that at the summit the chiefs weren't invited, but of course, Mr. Potter, you clarified that. You indicated that in fact they were, and that a lot of thought was put behind who was going to be invited. I thought that was great.

Then Mr. Tupper clarified that there was no reduction in the anti-gang programs, and that the money in fact was going out the door more now than in the past 10 years.

The third point brought up was that there was a concern that the first nation program had been cut, but Mr. Tupper, you indicated that it's been protected and is stable.

There was also a comment made that front-line policing service has been cut, but you mentioned that we'd seen an increase from $6 billion to $12 billion in the last handful of years, and you haven't been cutting on the front line. I've read “Police Resources in Canada” and seen constant-dollar increases in police resourcing in that publication year after year, particularly more in light of the need for recruitment, with around two-thirds of the police force—I think I've got my numbers right—preparing to retire between that time period.

Then we just heard that there were cuts to CBSA. I know, Mr. Potter, you weren't prepared to comment on that, but you probably have a great interest in it, so I'll just let you know that there was actually a 26% increase to the CBSA. That hasn't been cut either, so let's hope none of that sticks.

Now let's get to some questions.

I've seen some great work done in the Yukon Territory in terms of efficiencies and new modelling with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. It does touch on some of the questions that Mr. Rousseau talked about in terms of police engagement. They've increased the limited-duration posting time periods, as an example. That was directly what members wanted. They were just getting a foothold in the community in two years, and they said, “Why don't you let us stay for three or four years?” That was one area.

As well, reserve policing got brought back into the territory wholeheartedly in the last four or five years, with retired members coming back. I know that's been an advantage to policing services and the RCMP, and it was driven at the members' level. They said they needed this for training, needed this for leave accruement.

The RCMP has now moved into an agreement with the Whitehorse Correctional Centre to do their cellblock services. They've moved cellblock services out of the detachment up to the correctional centre. It's provided a higher level of efficiency and more time on the road for police officers. That's another thing driven by the front-line police officers in the RCMP there, and it's great use of community partnerships and relationships.

Moving from those operational things to the legislative end, is there legislation that we can look at to improve administrative efficiencies or financial efficiencies? One thing I'm looking at is the RCMP accountability act, for example. There is definitely a tremendous cost in leave and internal grievances and those sorts of things, and legislation can help reduce that burden, but what about legislation regarding proceeds of crime? Money that police officers generate in this country by fighting crime generally goes into general coffers. Is there some creative strategy we could use to see some of that returned to police work or given back directly into policing? Is there any other legislation?

I'll open this to anybody who has a comment on that.

● (0945)

Mr. Mark Potter: Perhaps I'll kick it off.

Certainly the bill you referred to, Bill C-42, is in third reading. The RCMP accountability act will strengthen the complaints regime, but as you noted, it will lead to certain improvements in HR management that should realize greater efficiencies within the RCMP, going forward, to manage their human resources, their discipline, their grievance processes, and so on. That's the federal responsibility.

As noted, the jurisdictional responsibilities are quite clear. You have, for example, in both Ontario and B.C. comprehensive reviews under way right now on their policing acts and their policing models. I expect we may see more of this across the country, given the fiscal challenges, but those governments are looking at their police service acts in a very comprehensive way, asking whether they need to make legislative changes to advance policing and improve efficiency and effectiveness. It's happening at that level.

Maybe I'll leave it at that.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Graham, we'll pick up on some of his question maybe a little later on.

Go ahead, Mr. Rafferty.

Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP): Thank you very much, Chair. It's great to be back.

Thank you for being here.

I found it interesting in Mr. Toews' remarks that he says we're all in this together; as the director general of policing policy, you know that's not true. There are police services in this country that are left far behind. I'll give you an example in a minute.

All of Mr. Toews' remarks in his opening remarks at the conference, and things you have been talking about today, make an assumption that all police services are at least at a certain level in this country—that they are at a point where perhaps they need to, as you say, become more efficient and more effective, but that they have the basics there. However, as you are aware as director general, there are police services, such as first nations police services, that are woefully inadequate in terms of their efficiency and their effectiveness.

There are a number of first nations police forces in northern Ontario, and on the road system they are not so bad. However, when they have to deal with 39 fly-in communities and not have the money there....

I know Mr. Toews says you can't buy this and that it's not about buying police services, but a service like the Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service in northwestern Ontario has virtually no communications equipment. They use cellphones. They have inadequate housing. There was an instance, I think last year, of a young officer being flown out with a burst spleen because of mould in his house. Officers continually go one week and two weeks past any rotation because there's no one to replace them. The OPP, which used to pick up the slack a little bit, over the last couple of years is no longer doing it because of their own budget restraints.

I know it probably didn't come up at this conference, but as you're planning and when you're talking about efficiencies and effectiveness and you have a police force like the one in northwestern Ontario, the Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service, that simply can't do the job.... I'm sure you're aware of the issues surrounding those communities in northern Ontario, particularly the fly-in communities, and drug and alcohol abuse, and so on and so forth, and all the issues associated there.

Is there any talk at all about dealing with those police services and making sure they are at least up to the standards of other police services across Canada?

● (0950)

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Tupper.

Mr. Shawn Tupper: There is ongoing discussion about the first nations policing program and the kinds of investments.

I think I would first want to point out that we need to remember that the first nations policing program is designed to add additional policing services on top of what the provinces already provide through their policing programs. No community is without policing, from the perspective that the provinces have a baseline of policing they provide.

You quite rightly point out a significant challenge in policing in Canada, which is how to deal with remote communities that don't have the same kind of access. This isn't an aboriginal issue. It's a reality in Canada that we do have to fly into some communities, and we have those challenges. Aboriginal communities tend to be isolated in many jurisdictions, and so they confront these issues across the board.

We have given advice to the government, and the government is discussing the future of that program and has been discussing with the provinces and territories the future of that program to determine the kinds of investments to make. We're going through exactly the same thing in looking at first nations policing as Mark is going through in looking at policing generally, which is finding what the most efficient model is and what the right kinds of investments are. We have a $120 million program, and we really do need to stop and think about whether we are spending that money in the right way.

You quite rightly point out that there are challenges in those communities that focus largely on some of the facilities and the tools they have to deliver policing. We are in active discussions with the provinces and territories, again across the land, to address those kinds of issues and try to find the models that will allow us to fund those things adequately.

Mr. John Rafferty: Just to clarify, there are in fact communities in northwestern Ontario that are without policing.

The Chair: You have 15 seconds.

Mr. John Rafferty: I hope by bringing this up.... Of course you are aware of the issues, particularly in the Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service. I don't know if there are others in as poor a state across the country as they are, but I would ask you to go back now after this and really make a serious effort in dealing with the issues that are faced in northwestern Ontario by the Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service.

Mr. Shawn Tupper: Absolutely.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Before we go to Mr. Payne, I will let the committee know that we will have other meetings a little later on at which the focus will be on aboriginal policing and remote policing.

Go ahead, Mr. Payne.

Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank the witnesses for coming today.

I was very interested in the conference that went on.

Mr. Potter, you indicated that sometime in the spring or the summer we should hear from the participants, particularly those in B. C. and Ontario, who I believe are going to chair the changes or support opportunities that may be available. I'm assuming that all provinces will still have input into those organizations or those provinces that are leading the changes.

Mr. Mark Potter: I'll take a stab at that one. I want to make sure I understand your question.

The summit has led to the undertaking of a collective process to develop a forward agenda. That collective process will involve all governments. It will involve the three national policing associations and other stakeholders. There's going to be a process of pretty broad-based engagement between now and the fall to explore with them the development of this forward agenda and areas in which we collectively may choose to act.

● (0955)

Mr. LaVar Payne: Have they specified any particular areas they want to look at during this stage?

Mr. Mark Potter: Perhaps.

There are a couple of things here. You may be picking up on my earlier remarks about B.C. and Ontario doing their own in-depth review of their police services, which is happening in parallel with this process. They have certain issues and areas of responsibility they want to look at in a very detailed way, so they'll be doing that in parallel.

Part of the goal and part of the reason we're all working together is that we can develop a Canada-wide approach that respects what's happening in each jurisdiction and adds value to those processes. There might be actions that one can take at a Canada-wide level, in terms of sharing information on best practices, for example, or for enhanced research and research coordination that would benefit everyone and support those other initiatives.

Mr. LaVar Payne: Thank you.

In Alberta we have a combination of municipal as well as RCMP services, particularly in my riding of Medicine Hat. I can think of a couple of communities. The City of Brooks, for example, uses RCMP, and the Town of Taber has its own municipal police force, as well as Medicine Hat.

Deputy Commissioner, in terms of the provinces and the agreement with the federal government on the RCMP services, could you give me some clarification on who's paying what costs, in particular when we get down into the City of Brooks, which has the forces there, as well as the small Town of Redcliff?

D/Commr Steve Graham: As you know, we just renewed or actually created a new agreement for policing services. It's based on the premise of a cost-sharing arrangement that brings benefits to both the federal government and the province and/or the municipality.

The numbers generally frame up as follows: for provincial policing there is a 70%-30% cost-share across a wide base of input costs. For municipalities in excess of 15,000 there is a 90%-10% split, and for municipalities of less than 15,000 it's generally 70%-30%, which is very similar to the provincial contract. There are dedicated municipal agreements, and some provinces have what are called extended agreements under the provincial umbrella, so it varies. In the territories it's the same model.

Mr. LaVar Payne: You and Mr. Potter talked about administrative cost savings. Do you have any details that would help us understand what that actually means? Are there any specific actions? Do those include benefits or those kinds of issues?

Mr. Mark Potter: I can take a stab at it more generally.

We don't have details—that's the short answer—because, frankly, there hasn't been a lot of cost reduction happening within Canada in policing at the macro level until quite recently, in the last year or so. We're starting to see that happen. I mentioned Toronto earlier; they've begun a process of reducing their budget, or at least containing the growth rate. There would be information there on what sort of administrative changes they've brought about to do that. Clearly the RCMP is in the process of doing that right now, as I mentioned in my remarks.

The U.K. is another good example. They have an agency of the central government that looks at what's happening in terms of policing reform efforts and how they are realizing savings. They begin to break it down in quite a detailed way as to the major trends they're seeing to realize those cost savings. Is it use of technology? Is it use of civilian staff? Is it use of tiered policing, and so on? They can break it out.

We're nowhere near that point yet in the level of measurement and reporting, but more fundamentally, we're not at that point in terms of the degree of change that has happened within our police service and being able to capture that in a systematic way so that we can gain anecdotal information in Canada. In the U.K. they have a much more advanced system of tracking and analyzing the reform efforts and efficiencies they've realized.

● (1000)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

This is the one place where the government has a back-to-back question. Mr. Gill, welcome to committee. It's your turn. Mr. LaVar Payne has already used up one of your minutes. You have four minutes.

Mr. LaVar Payne: How can that be? I have another question.

Mr. Parm Gill (Brampton—Springdale, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I also want to thank the witnesses for being here.

My question is for Mr. Potter. In your opening remarks, you mentioned another key FPT deliverable: the catalogue of initiatives from across Canada that improve the efficiency and effectiveness of policing that was also showcased at the summit. I'm wondering if you're able to tell us what some of those initiatives in the catalogue are.

Mr. Mark Potter: Sure.

The catalogue is a work in progress. This was a commitment made at the Charlottetown meeting. These initiatives at one level sound quite simplistic, but in reality I think they can be quite fundamental to reform efforts. As a police service, it's not an easy task when you're looking at how you might reform, innovate, and make yourself more efficient and effective, so other examples from across the country and around the world that let you learn what works and what doesn't work can be tremendously helpful, at least in giving you ideas into areas you want to look at more deeply and then perhaps customize for your particular situation.

We're still gathering the information from all the provincial and territorial governments and the police services within them. We hope to have a document soon that we would be able to share with our provincial and territorial colleagues first and foremost so they can see the whole package. We were able to pull that together in a rough draft at the summit for them to look at, but this is still a work in progress and will take a little longer to be finalized. This would be an important tool to share.

It builds on initiatives we've seen in other countries. The Department of Justice in the United States has an online tool called "CrimeSolutions.gov". I'd recommend the committee look at it. It's quite a robust site where they look at various initiatives, whether problem-oriented policing, hot spots, increased patrols in particular areas, integrated teams, and so on. They look at those programs and the evidence-based research related to those programs and try to validate how effective those programs are. It's a very user-friendly site that lists what the research is telling you about the various initiatives happening in police services right across the United States and how effective they are based on sound analytics related to those programs. I think moving toward that kind of model in Canada could be very helpful.

Mr. Parm Gill: Would this be a first-time effort of this kind? Is a previous so-called catalogue not available for best practices for other police forces or agencies that they can share?

Mr. Mark Potter: My understanding is that this is new to Canada. Perhaps some of the academics you may hear from would have knowledge of a number of initiatives that are under way. They would be able to pull that information together in some fashion.

Having spoken with quite a number of academics in Canada, I know that really is a gap. It's an area where we can do better. We can learn from others, and we can build that capacity here to assist police services in their reforms.

Mr. Parm Gill: Perfect.

I'm also wondering if you'd be able to tell us what amount of money the federal government contributes to policing at the provincial and municipal levels with regard to contracts. As well, are there any other areas where costs are incurred?

Mr. Mark Potter: I'm afraid I don't have those numbers at my fingertips. I'd have to look into it, certainly conceptually, to break it down. Of that $12 billion figure we spend on policing in Canada, a portion would be direct funding by the federal government to the RCMP. Within that, as Deputy Commissioner Graham mentioned, a portion goes to contract jurisdictions. It's the 30% or the 10% share. We would have to pull those numbers together to come up with the precise number for you.

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

Thank you, Mr. Gill.

We'll now move to Mr. Garrison, please.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I like a lot of things we're hearing here. It's interesting to me that it seems, in part at least, to be heading in a different direction than the government's traditional approach to crime. It's moving toward an approach we've advocated, which is more along the lines of building safer communities.

Not having the minister appear before us, I think it'll be interesting to see our report. I guess at that time the minister will give us a response to whatever report we choose to create on this topic of the economics of policing, but I'm certainly very glad to hear the emphasis on partnership and consultation.

I want to turn to the specific question of mental health. We have seen, in the prison system, the cost driver that mental health problems can be and the difficulties we've had in dealing with that. In my own experience, about a decade ago, when I sat on a municipal police board, we had discussions about mental health as a significant cost driver for our police force. That included things like uniformed officers having to sit at a hospital with a person in crisis until a doctor arrived. It meant sometimes sitting there as long as six or seven hours, when they could be otherwise used for crime prevention purposes.

I've had some recent discussions with municipal chiefs of police and with the RCMP inspector in West Shore in my riding. This issue continues to be a problem in British Columbia. When people have mental health crises, even if there are community resources, people tend not to have their crises between 9 and 5, when mental health agencies tend to be available. They tend to have them during evenings and weekends, when the police are really the only resource available in the community.

Was this topic brought up at the summit? Is there any way we can try to make sure that in this study we address mental health issues and leaving mental health to police?

● (1005)

Mr. Mark Potter: Perhaps I'll take a first crack at this.

Yes, absolutely, this is a key concern, because that is a pretty important driver of calls to police for service. How you deal with individuals with mental health challenges as effectively as possible is a very important part of being responsive to your community and enhancing community safety. I don't want to harp too much on best practices, but you certainly have examples, as alluded to earlier, of models in Alberta, for example, where Calgary, Edmonton, and Grand Prairie have joint response teams. A mental health professional goes out with the police officer on particular calls, because often they are better trained and better prepared to deal with those sorts of individuals who need that help. There are initiatives like that.

There are other initiatives that in some ways sound kind of mundane but could be quite important. In Whitehorse, I know that the RCMP has an agreement with the hospital there on how they will deal with the treatment of mental health-challenged individuals who are brought in as a result of incidents. Finding the most efficient way the hospital can engage with those individuals and help them allows the police officers to get back out into the community and continue doing police work. As you mentioned, you sometimes have situations in which the police are required to be in a hospital for a considerable period of time, and that's not the best use of resources.

Mr. Shawn Tupper: You could write a whole report just on this facet. The debate around the implications of mental health issues across the criminal justice system is hot. We discuss it at every venue I sit at.

Certainly from a crime prevention perspective, the focus of the crime prevention program is on youth, trying to understand the risks that we can identify early on with respect to youth and how and why they are acting out. Getting to them earlier and diverting them away from the criminal justice system is a really critical element of that. Looking at mental health issues in that context is certainly a big issue.

Following the summit, I went straight to Montreal and participated in a criminal justice forum where the topic was mental health. Again, we're trying to look at diversion within the criminal justice system, so it's giving the courts opportunities to look at people who have mental heath issues and trying to deal with sentencing and whatnot that is more innovative, if I can put it that way. Certainly it's giving tools to all aspects of the system so that they can address these kinds of issues rather than just simply judicializing people who perhaps should not be judicialized.

Within the Correctional Service of Canada, we've made some fairly good progress over the last five years in terms of looking at how we're managing offenders who have mental health issues. We now have mental health programming that 80% of offenders can access. We have beds available for one in 20 offenders who need actual day bed in-patient treatment, so there is lots of investing in this huge issue right across the whole spectrum of the criminal justice system.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Thank you for your question.

We'll move to Mr. Aspin, please.

Welcome back, Mr. Aspin.

Mr. Jay Aspin (Nipissing—Timiskaming, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Welcome, gentlemen. Welcome to the committee.

In a study on policing economics, the big elephant in the room here is obviously salaries. You have pointed out that costs have gone from $6 billion to $12 billion over the last decade, with a 40% increase in police salaries.

That has caused a lot of stress in my riding, particularly among a lot of the smaller rural communities. They're having a tough time coping with their policing costs. They are looking at all kinds of ways and means of reducing police costs.

We have some figures here. We're talking about a 40% increase in police officers' salaries compared with 11% for the average Canadian.

Mr. Potter, could you explain to me why there is such a discrepancy between police officers and the rest of Canadians?

● (1010)

Mr. Mark Potter: I think this is an important dimension, but I think it's important to keep it in context.

I think police officer salaries have been increasing over the past period particularly because of the fiscal situations in most jurisdictions, which have been quite favourable. Collective agreements have been reached on that basis. As that fiscal situation tightens to a considerable degree, that problem will begin to solve itself, because there will be a requirement for all jurisdictions to manage within their resources. We have seen that at the federal government level. We have seen that in terms of RCMP salaries, which sets an important precedent. To a considerable degree, that issue will be constrained through that process.

I would make a couple of other observations. The nature of police work is tremendously complex and challenging. Your colleague just mentioned mental health issues. To have an individual with the right skill set to be able to deal with an individual in distress and to recognize the potential that the situation could range from the individual simply requiring a little assistance and sympathy to a potential violent act—to have the training, the judgment, and the interpersonal communications to do that is tremendously difficult. To get those individuals, to retain those individuals, you need to pay them a good salary.

Having been involved in this issue for some time now, I actually don't think it's a question of police officer salaries. I think it's a question of the salary envelope, the overall amount you are spending on human resources and how you get the biggest bang for your buck. I think a whole bunch of ways you can do that aren't necessarily about reducing police officer salaries—far from it; they're much more about civilianization, tiered policing, technology, and other tools to improve efficiency.

Mr. Jay Aspin: Thank you for that.

It seems to me that this study is a very introspective study. I just wondered if there was an element that could look at policing costs relative to the overall global costs. Is there any element that would take a look at the proportions there and try to suggest some means of giving us a perspective on those costs as well?

Mr. Mark Potter: I think we have a bit of a luxury in Canada in that we're ahead of this issue. I don't think there are necessarily a lot of issues on which you have an opportunity to see what's happening around the world, to analyze the trends that are happening there and in Canada, to try to get ahead of the issue, and to try to take action before you have to do things in a drastic or blunt way. We're looking at well-considered strategies to manage the growth in policing costs that we've seen in Canada over the last several years.

Policing is not alone. All government expenditures have been going up at a considerable rate, both in Canada and in many other countries. As you look at particular segments of public spending, you see that it's about delving into those areas and finding ways to respond to the fiscal realities through finding efficiencies and improving effectiveness.

We're certainly benefiting, I believe, from the U.K. and the U.S. experience, in that they haven't had that luxury. They were placed in a situation in which their revenue drops for many jurisdictions were so severe that they didn't have the luxury of saying, “Okay, now we're going to spend the time to analyze how we can improve our policing services, look in depth at our police services and how efficient and effective they are, and develop well-considered strategies to respond.” In many cases, they had to respond within a matter of months.

We certainly have seen U.S. cities that have gone bankrupt, and we've seen states in the U.S. that have had to make 20%, 30%, or 40% cuts to their policing budgets within a matter of months. The U.K. is going through a process of a cut of 15% to 20%, depending on the police service.

These are big cuts. We are fortunate to get ahead of those issues. Hopefully the kinds of fiscal realities will not be as hard here, but they are nonetheless constraining, as we see when we look at our overall fiscal picture. It's about giving police services and the broader policing community an opportunity to see what works best and to develop customized solutions that respond to community and resident needs in the time we have to make those adjustments.

● (1015)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Potter.

We'll move to Mr. Scarpaleggia, please, for five minutes.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: I would like to follow up on this issue on bringing in mental health workers, say, to deal with situations that otherwise, up until now, police officers have had to devote a lot of time to.

As you mentioned to Mr. Aspin, finding somebody who is specialized in these areas of course means that there will be costs involved, and probably pretty high costs, because they're specialized, but bringing in mental health workers to do some of the work that police officers have been doing would come out of a provincial health budget, though, I guess. In a sense, it would be almost a cost savings to the police force if there were that kind of substitution of manpower.

There's no doubt that the kind of manpower required in police forces is generally becoming more expensive because, as we were saying before, there's a demand for specialized skills, whether it be to solve financial crime or other kinds of Internet crime and so on. In terms of the supply of manpower, do you foresee that there will be enough of this skilled labour power coming forth in the future, or will there be labour shortages in these areas?

D/Commr Steve Graham: As with most things, I think there's often always an ebb and flow.

I will comment very briefly on mental health and other calls for service that the police receive. When you look at the crime rate over the past decade, you will see that it has gone down quite noticeably, but calls for service generally are fairly flat. What this says is that there are a lot of other things going on, of which mental health calls are certainly one of the dynamics.

I often think of policing in terms of a river. The police are kind of the last net, in many respects. The more intervention there is upstream earlier on, the fewer the issues that are caught in the net further downstream, which I think is important for costs, for call management, for training, for complexity of the service, and important in terms of sending police to calls that they're not well equipped for, in many cases.

Certainly the issue has been raised in smaller communities and other areas where a lot of those supports don't exist. Anything that can be done in behind the system to improve access and to improve community capacity goes a long way toward improving the overall delivery of community safety, which is what it's about.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: You are saying the calls are staying constant in number. If the crime rate is going down and we figure out a way to relieve police forces of the need to answer a lot of those calls because they're not always about crime anymore, do you see the possibility that the number of police officers, and obviously the salary commitments associated with police forces, would be dropping in the future? If we're doing a good job, if we take the information we're getting from your study and solve this problem of matching skills with services required and so on, do you see a possibility of the number of police officers going down in the future, to follow the crime rate? I suppose that's almost an objective, really.

● (1020)

D/Commr Steve Graham: It's fair to note that in Canada police resources have increased in the past decade in terms of head count. Probably now, because of economic reality and constraint, it will start to go down. That will be an outcome, I think. Perhaps more important relative to your point is that if we look at Canada and compare it in terms of officer-population ratios to many other western countries, we see that we are towards the lower end of that spectrum as it is, so we are starting in a very different place from the U.K. or the United States. I think that in terms of our opportunity to rationalize, to manage calls and so on, we're probably in a better position to do that and to take on some of these initiatives.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: There are fewer police officers per 100,000 inhabitants than in other countries. Do we have a better ratio? Is that what you were saying?

D/Commr Steve Graham: That's right, yes.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Scarpaleggia.

Now we will go back to Madame Doré Lefebvre for five minutes.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I think we have had a very good discussion about mental health and the challenges that poses to our police services.

Mr. Graham, since you represent our large national police force, I would like to know if you have done any studies, internally perhaps, on the impact of mental health on your police force. Do you have a different approach in dealing with this issue, which is becoming increasingly prevalent in our population? What are your officers doing? What is their approach?

D/Commr Steve Graham: Thank you for the question.

[*English*]

The situation looks different in many different jurisdictions, and that relates to demographics, moneys invested in the health system or mental health supports, and so on. Generally mental health, and responding to mental health, has been a concern of the organization for many years. Our emphasis has traditionally been on how officers are trained to be prepared to respond to cases, and also on building strong partnerships and connections in the local community for all the various services that are out there.

It does not look the same across the country. Province by province, community by community, capacity varies, so the responses vary. Some communities—for instance, Halifax Regional Municipality—have fairly robust integrated teams with health professionals. They respond very quickly are very positive. In small communities in the north, many times the police may be the only resource available, as the point was made, at two o'clock in the morning. It's not a consistent picture across the country.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: You are really making an effort to determine what resources are available in each province, city or town, or at least you are working on it. I find that very interesting.

If it were possible, do you think it would be better to have people specialized in mental health working with the police or would it be easier to train police forces in that area? Is there a solution that represents the best of both worlds? If it were possible, would it be easier to apply a certain model?

[*English*]

D/Commr Steve Graham: For instance, in the Halifax Regional Municipality they have rapid response teams, so if the police are called to an incident or come across a case exhibiting signs of psychological distress, those teams are mobilized. They're on the scene very quickly and they work hours that are well aligned with the times when you tend to see these activities. That's a very positive model, and those exist in many other municipalities.

It comes down to local capacity, size, available resources, and what the health system and other social services have the capacity to provide. In rural New Brunswick, those resources are not nearly as bountiful, so the police often respond and will often take individuals in distress to community hospitals, or whatever the case may be, and are often tied up for quite extended periods of time until there's some resolution to the case.

In terms of what could be done, that's more of a discussion for a lot of those other entities and agencies. Having policed in many different provinces, we often work with those entities. We have very strong relationships and partnerships, we're on a first-name basis, and we're all looking to try to minimize wherever possible the judicialization, I think the word was, of mental health.

● (1025)

The Chair: You have 30 seconds.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: I think Mr. Tupper wanted to add something.

Mr. Shawn Tupper: Actually, there are two answers to your question. In municipalities like Calgary or Vancouver, it is possible to establish partnerships across the system. But it's a different story in smaller cities: no resources are available for this.

[*English*]

Going right back to the first question of this session, what we see is the need to understand the character of Canada and those realities, because the best answer in Vancouver is partnerships. The best answer in small-town prairie Canada is better training for officers to be attuned to the demands they're seeing when they respond.

I think that's something your study should focus on. There's more than one right answer, and the right answer is going to depend on where you are in Canada.

The Chair: Thank you very much for that, Mr. Tupper.

We'll move to Ms. Bergen, please.

Ms. Candice Bergen: Thank you very much.

I have three quick areas I want to touch on.

Following up on this issue, I think it would be very important for us to bring in someone from the Calgary police, and possibly Halifax and Vancouver, to hear them. I spent half a day in Calgary sitting around a table talking to the officers about what they do. It's quite amazing. They literally have someone from Alberta Health, the school division, mental health, addictions, and housing. They're not just meeting once every six weeks, but as you said, sir, they're on a first-name basis with individuals, such as maybe someone who has an addiction and is being picked up for petty crimes. Finally this person says they need help—they want to get off this drug or they want to quit drinking—and immediately there's someone there to help. It's not the police officer; the police officer knows who to call.

It's an excellent model, which I think, coming from a small town, can be adapted pretty quickly, because in a small town people are much closer together and we really know who to call. We know who the housing person is in Morden, Manitoba, and who can help get someone some treatment. I think there are ways we can adapt it. It's just seeing how they do it and then adapting it to a smaller jurisdiction.

I hope we can get someone in—for example, Chief Rick Hanson—to explore this, because it's quite encouraging.

I found it interesting that one of their greatest challenges was a very practical one: the privacy issue. It took them a while to start getting things going, because one program didn't want to talk to another one. They said there were privacy issues. That's very practical. They had to deal with that, and once they did, everybody relaxed and agreed to work together.

Mr. Potter, what is tiered policing? You referred to it a couple of times. I hadn't heard that phrase before.

Mr. Mark Potter: Tiered policing exists in many police services, and it's essentially the top of the pyramid. You would have fully sworn and trained police officers who carry badges, carry guns, have powers of arrest, and so on, and you would have a number of tiers below that. You might have what's called in some places a community safety officer, someone who doesn't have the same level of training and may not carry a gun but who carries out different functions such as neighbourhood engagement, problem-solving at the local level, intelligence collection, and these kinds of functions. They're very much on the ground working with the community and sharing information with police officers who often have to respond to incidents and come into that community.

Then you might have another level below that—volunteers, cadets, auxiliary officers with even less training—doing even more routine functions, such as managing events or securing a site. Those are pretty routine tasks.

Ms. Candice Bergen: Good. Thanks very much.

How much time do I have left, Chair?

The Chair: You have two minutes.

Ms. Candice Bergen: Okay.

Something we haven't talked about at all and something I hear so many times when I talk to front-line officers is the whole issue of the revolving door. They say to us, "We go through the process. We investigate. We follow the criminal. We arrest them. We go through the court system. They're sentenced, and then three months later they're out, and we have to go through it all again." One of the pieces of legislation we brought forward to address that is Bill C-10, our Safe Streets and Communities Act.

Can you talk about the cost to policing of the revolving door—repeat offenders, offenders who should be doing the time for the crimes they commit but who are instead released, meaning that police have to go through the whole process again—and about how our specific legislation can help reduce that cost?

● (1030)

Mr. Mark Potter: That's a big one. That's perhaps a little bit beyond the remit that I would be able to comment on.

Ms. Candice Bergen: Is there any comment, then, just on the basic idea of police having to go through the process of putting a criminal in jail and then three months later having to go through it all again? There's a cost associated with that.

Mr. Mark Potter: Certainly there have been some analyses done of the costs of crime and victimization in Canada. They're not longitudinal so they are of limited utility, but the figures regarding the costs of criminality to individuals, communities, and the Canadian economy are pretty staggering.

Getting back to a question that was raised earlier, the reported crime rate is dropping, but police are still busy. There are a lot of service calls. The nature of our society and the nature of policing in modern industrial countries is that you're often dealing with more intractable social and criminal challenges, so at one level you have your response and you have your integrated teams, but it goes even deeper on the crime prevention front to get at the roots of criminality.

These are individuals who may at one point be on a trajectory that leads to their having drug problems, mental health issues, and so on. Right from the beginning we want to get them the help and the support they need through integrated approaches that basically, over the long term, change the nature of criminality in Canada, in order to deal with the much more intractable social and criminal challenges we face.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Potter.

We'll move to the opposition and to Mr. Garrison, please.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'll resist the temptation of creating Bill C-10 planks and trying to make our witnesses walk off them.

I have to say that when we're dealing with mental health issues, one of the concerns I have certainly heard in my community is the question of mandatory minimum sentences and their impact on those whose cause of offending may have been mental health issues, but I'll just leave that there and not try to make our witnesses walk that plank.

I want to talk a little bit about the question of privatization.

In looking at the economics of policing, we've had the discussion about civilianization. I guess there's a concern on this side of the table that sometimes that too quickly turns to privatization of policing services. We seem to have had a trend that's simply been accepted in Canada that large areas of what are really public spaces —and I'm talking about malls—have now become areas that are policed by private police services. I hope when we're talking about the economics of policing that we at some point can come to terms with the accountability problems raised when we have private policing of public space by people with less training than the police and by people without good accountability mechanisms. I wondered if that issue was raised at the summit.

Mr. Mark Potter: Thank you. I think that's a great question.

There are a few dimensions to it, and you're keying in on one of them. We've seen pretty dramatic growth in the private security industry in Canada. In fact, right now for every two public police officers there are three private security officers. They do some of the tasks that you referred to—mall security, building security, and so on, some of the fairly routine stuff—but they also do increasingly sophisticated work with banks and so on to provide support to them. That's definitely a growing industry.

We had an interesting presentation at the summit from an individual in that industry. In fact, he raised exactly the concern you just raised, which is whether there is sufficient regulation of the private security industry to ensure that you have the right level of professionalization and accreditation around those individuals. He said it would help them as a business to be able to function in society if people had confidence that they were fully qualified and fully trained and that they knew exactly the bounds of their responsibilities. He was actually making the case—and the regulation of the private security industry is an area of provincial jurisdiction—that provinces should have pretty robust regimes in place to regulate the private security industry. There's a bit of a mixed bag across Canada.

● (1035)

Mr. Randall Garrison: I wonder whether Deputy Commissioner Graham has any comments on the growth of private policing and any challenges it creates for the RCMP.

D/Commr Steve Graham: In terms of challenges generally, I would consider a lot of the work being caught in the area you're articulating supportive of the general public safety need. I think Mr. Potter has hit the nail on the head. From my discussions with deputy ministers in several provinces, I would say they're all trying to update and modernize their regulations and legislation specific to this area. It's going to continue to grow. If we see the same patterns here that are indicated from other countries, it would seem that it will continue to grow.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Continuing with Deputy Commissioner Graham, I'd like to follow up on something I think Mr. Rousseau may have run out of time on. That's the question of whether there has been a shift of some responsibilities that were formerly RCMP responsibilities at the border to the Canada Border Services Agency. I wonder if you're in a position to comment on that.

D/Commr Steve Graham: Well, not really. It's a shared responsibility at ports of entry and at the border in between. Both entities work very collaboratively, often in an integrated fashion. In many cases, it's a very positive working relationship. I would articulate it more as that we want to make sure that the best resources available are dealing with the most challenging cases.

Mr. Randall Garrison: If I can, I'll just ask you one more question.

I've had a concern raised with me about overlap between CSIS and the RCMP in the area of national security. We're talking about the efficient use of resources. CSIS was created to take over some national security responsibilities, but there has been a tendency of the RCMP to regrow some of those functions within the RCMP. Are you in a position to comment on that?

D/Commr Steve Graham: I'm not in a great position. I would just say generally, however, that our emphasis and attention is always on criminal activities related to national security. Again, the relationship and sharing with CSIS is exceptional. It's a very different world today.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll move to Mr. Hawn, please, for five minutes.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to go back to Deputy Commissioner Graham on the issue of the cost of the revolving door. From your experience in leadership and so on, you probably can't comment on dollars, but what's the impact of time—which is dollars—on the officer, and what's the impact on the morale of the officer when he sees the same guy coming back time after time?

D/Commr Steve Graham: I think my response would be more around a lot of the work that's been done in recent years on crime reduction. It really focuses on frequent offenders or chronic offenders. How do we interrupt that?

In some of the cases that have already been cited here, it's more about the right social supports. In other cases it's about more effectively dealing with patterns of behaviour and interrupting and stopping them. We've had some very good success in many areas of the country around working in that genre and that activity. No doubt, if you're dealing with the same people over and over again, you have to get to the root causes, as Mark often talks about, and figure out what drives that behaviour. Many times there are other issues going on, whether it's mental health, substance abuse, or other challenges. If you can do something there and get better engagement there, you often can change the dynamic you're seeing.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: I ride along from time to time with the Ottawa Police Service. You talked about being on a first-name basis with some of these people you pick up: “Oh, yes, it's old Fred again. Fred, come on in. You know the drill. Up against the wall,” or whatever—

D/Commr Steve Graham: Yes—

Hon. Laurie Hawn: It's a bit of a joke at times, but also they're frustrated because they feel as if they're wasting their time, so anything we can do to nip it in the bud obviously is productive.

I want to stick with you, Deputy Commissioner. The RCMP's portion of the budget savings is about $195 million over the next two to three years. Can you get specific at all about how you are specifically looking at reducing spending in your area and how you're auditing that to see whether we and you are doing what is mandated?

D/Commr Steve Graham: There have been targets apportioned across the organization. Some of that relates to such things as the administrative efficiencies I spoke about earlier. For instance, in compensation we used to have pay and benefits offices in each region of the country. We're now going to one. Similarly, for accounts payable—how our bills are paid and how we manage that—we're going from four to one. We're looking at the rationalization of forensic laboratories and are reducing the number across the country. We're looking at re-engineering in federal policing and re-engineering in forensic sciences as well. What that means is workflow, processes, and people. Do we have the right specialties? Are we putting investment in the right places? How can we draw savings out of that?

Civilianization has come up here today, and we've civilianized a lot over the past decade. That pattern continues. If you don't need peace officer status to do your job, then we look at ways of civilianizing that. The savings there are often around salary. Salary levels tend to be somewhat less, or there are savings on benefits.

● (1040)

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Have you changed your audit process to keep track of that, or is your previous audit process sufficient to track it?

D/Commr Steve Graham: No, we have a very robust audit system. We have a chief audit officer. They do their plans based on risk, as well as initiatives such as this. You know, the money's gone, we'd better save it, so....

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Okay.

Mr. Potter, we talked about non-uniformed police such as mall guards and so on. Were the commissionaires involved in this conference just recently past? They do a lot of that kind of stuff.

Mr. Mark Potter: I believe a representative of the commissionaires was invited, yes.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Okay.

That's all I have, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

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

Go ahead, Mr. Garrison, please.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I know we're drawing to a close here.

I have a question about timing. We've launched this study in the committee, we're going to hear from witnesses, and we would like to be able to provide a report that contributes to this process. You've talked about the department's initiatives and proceeding with these three pillars. What is the timeline the department is proceeding on for coming up with a plan or a product, and does that allow time for this committee to have input into that process?

Mr. Mark Potter: I certainly hope it does. We are looking at having a forward agenda for the consideration of FPT ministers in the fall of this year. They haven't confirmed when in the fall their meeting will actually be. Last year, it was at the end of October, so that's probably the timeframe we're looking at. Between now and then there will be a great deal of collaboration with all PT governments, the main policing associations, and other stakeholders—as well as police services, of course—to try to flesh out that forward agenda, so seeing your input in that timeframe....

I think it's a very iterative process. As you're hearing from individuals, you'll be talking to the same individuals we're going to be talking to, so you'll be hearing things. Also, it's a very rich opportunity for us, as we're going through these next few months of collaboration, to be part of these deliberations and hear what's being brought to the attention of this committee and learn from that and build on that. I think there are tremendous opportunities to work with the committee.

Mr. Randall Garrison: I know that we'll work as efficiently as we can, but often legislation overtakes us here. I was just wondering if you could give us a ballpark figure of when the latest would be that we could have effective input. If we were to finish by the end of April, would that still fit the timeline? If we run into May or June, are we going to run into problems?

Mr. Mark Potter: I think your ongoing deliberations are helpful, so right from the get-go it's going to be helpful, and the hearings you have planned over the next few weeks.... Yes, certainly, April would be ideal to be able to factor that into the considerations and consultations that are under way.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Are we done?

Mr. Randall Garrison: I think we're done.

The Chair: And are we done here...?

Mr. Scarpaleggia is done.

Well, we'll finish three minutes early today. Certainly that isn't because we have a lack of questions or anything. We've had a two-hour seminar with you folks, and usually our meetings are an hour long. We really thank you for your presentations today.

Mr. Mark Potter: Thank you.

The Chair: It's nice when we can kick-start our study by having you from the department and Deputy Commissioner Graham here. Thank you very much.

Committee members, we'll see you again on Thursday morning.

The meeting is adjourned.

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