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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)): Good morning, everyone.

This is meeting number 71 of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

It is Thursday, February 14, 2013. Happy Valentine's, to each one of you.

We are continuing our study of economics of policing in Canada.

In our first hour, we have appearing before us by video conference from Staffordshire, England, the Chief Constable with the Staffordshire Police, Mr. Michael Cunningham.

I don't know what time it is in Britain, but it's a quarter to nine here. We're very glad he's able to appear this morning.

The committee thanks our witnesses for appearing today to help us with our study of policing in Canada.

Sir, I invite you to make some opening remarks before we proceed to questions from the members of Parliament in our committee.

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham (Chief Constable, Staffordshire Police): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you.

I want to test that you can hear me okay.

The Chair: You're coming through loud and clear, but with somewhat of a British accent.

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: That must be the technology because you sound loud from across the water also.

What I thought I would do, Chairman, would be to set out the context of Staffordshire Police and the situation in the U.K. and then tell you how we have responded to it here in Staffordshire.

Members may be aware that the spending squeeze in the U.K. is affecting all elements of the public sector, including policing. To give you some context, the budget of Staffordshire Police was about £184 million in April 2010. The squeeze means that we will be taking approximately £38 million out of that budget over a period of four years. The challenge is for us to dramatically cut our cost base and to maintain high levels of operational delivery. In my budget, 86% is spent on staffing costs. Therefore, a reduction of approximately 20% means that we have to cut into salary costs. To that end, there will be effectively 300 fewer police officers and 300 fewer police staff members, non-police officers, by the end of the four-year period. There is potential for a further squeeze beyond 2014, for which we are bracing ourselves.

This has meant that here in Staffordshire Police we have not recruited any officers into the police force for some three years now and we are managing the shrinking of the organization by not recruiting and requiring officers to retire when they reach pensionable service age. This is the same across the country. Police officer numbers in England and Wales now are at about an 11-year low. By 2015, there will be approximately 15,000 fewer police officers in the U.K. than there were at the beginning of the process in April 2010.

What that has required us to do is basically to go back to first principles. If we were to try to continue to police in the way that we have always done so with significantly fewer people, we would simply fall over. The scale of the cuts has required us to take a transformational approach to the delivery of policing and to redesign policing delivery in ways that had previously been unthinkable.

In terms of first principles, what I did here in Staffordshire was to ask what is policing built upon? Very clearly the model that we have undertaken here in the U.K. is very much about local policing solving local problems. So I was able to commit in years one and two of the spending cuts that we would not reduce any neighbourhood officers. In other words, every other part of the business had to be scrutinized to take the hit. It has required us to re-engineer our business processes and to collaborate more effectively with other police forces and crucially with other public sector agencies.

If I may say, even with the taking of already well over £15 million out of my budget, crime has continued to reduce, public confidence has continued to increase, and public satisfaction with the service that we are delivering is still very high, at about 88% of people who receive a service from us being either satisfied or very satisfied, and that is in the teeth of the significant cuts we're facing.

We have had to look very closely at not necessarily the numbers of officers we have, but the productivity of those officers and how we have deployed them. We have reviewed things like our shift patterns, we have done away with the concept of things like double-crewing unless it's absolutely necessary, and we are thinking about how we can make our services more accessible to members of the public in different ways. For example, if I can take £1 million out of my estate costs, it means I don't have to take that £1 million out of salary costs. So we're looking at, wherever possible, if we can share public access points and buildings with other public sector agencies. It seems a madness to me at a time of such public sector austerity that in one town we may have a police station next door to a town hall, next door to a library, next door to a school, when we ought to be thinking much more dramatically about the rationalization of public estate.

In terms of our business processes, it was at this point we engaged with the private sector. The consulting company, KPMG, worked with us to do two things. One was they brought expertise to us around business process redesign to take out inefficiencies in some of our core processes such as core handling, prison handling, and crime management. They injected significant pace and professionalism and expertise into this work for us. The second thing they did was they built up a capacity within my force so we did not become dependent upon the consultants going forward. It was difficult because we had to pay significant amounts of money up front at a time when there isn't a lot of money about, but the return on investment was significant. The lessons for private sector engagement are the following. We had to be crystal clear about what was required, we had to build capacity and not reliance, we had to challenge them on innovative ways of paying for their services, and we had to think of new models of engagement with the private sector that are beyond simple consultancy and outsourcing.

I would like to make just a couple of final points, Chairman. One of the things that I think this affords us is an opportunity to have discussions that we probably ought to have been having anyway about the use of public money. There is much closer cross-public sector delivery in some of our crucial areas of activity. One example I gave when I was over, a month or so ago, was in relation to a multi-agency safeguarding hub, where we have police officers co-located and jointly managed with social workers and with health professionals dealing with the early intervention of our most vulnerable people in our communities, vulnerable adults and children at risk.

● (0850)

Two things have happened as a result of that. The first thing is that the operation is far cheaper than it was, because we're able to co-locate and jointly manage. Crucially, though, it is more effective because we're able to share information and design interventions far more effectively than was previously the case.

Finally, I will offer a reflection on how this has been in terms of leadership. Leading through austerity is a significant challenge. The real learning, for me, is that we have to maintain confidence and optimism with the people we are leading if we are to continue to deliver effective public services at a significantly reduced cost. That in itself has been a leadership challenge. I am not saying I have always got it right, but we've given it a very good go.

Thank you.

● (0855)

The Chair: Thank you very much to our guest, to our Chief Constable in Staffordshire.

We'll now move into our first round of questioning.

We'll start with Ms. Bergen, please, for seven minutes.

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

Thank you, Chief Cunningham, for being here with us today. We appreciate you taking the time.

You provided some very interesting information. I have a few questions just to clarify a couple of things.

Again, when did you begin the cuts that you've been talking about? In what year did they start?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: In April 2010.

Ms. Candice Bergen: So it's been just about three years.

Has that been all under your leadership, sir?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: Yes indeed.

Ms. Candice Bergen: Clearly the decisions were made together with, I guess, your city council. They said you needed to cut your budget by a certain percent, and then you had to sit down with your leadership and decide how you were going to do it.

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: Yes. In terms of where the funding predominantly comes from in the U.K., about two-thirds of my funding comes from central government. It was central government that decided on the level of cuts. That's the same across the country.

Then I had to sit down, once I knew what the budget forecast was, with my leadership team and redesign how we would deliver services at a significantly reduced cost.

Ms. Candice Bergen: Were any limitations placed on you—i.e., you can involve the private sector for this, but you cannot involve them for that—or were you given basically carte blanche to make the decisions you had to make?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: I was given carte blanche. The only kind of constraint around private sector engagement was the history of policing in the U.K., which preserves policing delivery for sworn police officers paid through the public sector. But private sector engagement varies across U.K. police forces. Some have outsourced significant parts of their business, such as call handling and custody arrangements, and others have engaged the private sector differently.

I chose not to go the wholesale outsourcing route, and to engage the private sector through consultancy.

Ms. Candice Bergen: In terms of that consultancy, you mentioned that KPMG came in. One of the challenges we hear, when we talk about the economics of policing and cutting back, is that it's hard to measure. It's not like a factory, let's say, where you can measure input and output and know literally moment by moment where you can make something more efficient.

We know that with good companies, that's exactly what they do. They in fact have a day-to-day and a moment-by-moment way of looking at how to make things more efficient. In policing, obviously that's the challenge. How did KPMG manage that in terms of measuring, in terms of coming in and asking what was effective?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: They worked with our staff. This is where I think we've had to make significant improvements, around the very point you make: measuring productivity. It is simply not good enough, I think, when we are working with such significant financial challenges, to say that we cannot capture productivity and efficiency.

What the private sector was able to assist us with was that we able to look at our deployment practices, the workload of officers, the number of incidents they dealt with, and the number of crimes they dealt with, and to look at where we could be much more efficient around how we deployed staff.

They were also able to design and map out our core business processes—for example, from the arrest of an individual through their detention and subsequent interviewing. When that process was mapped out, we were able to capture where the inefficiencies were, such as where the officers were wasting time waiting around in custody blocks for solicitors or for access to detained persons, and to see if we could squeeze that time so that we could make officers think about their time far more productively.

● (0900)

Ms. Candice Bergen: When you talked about making the cuts, you said 86% of all your costs were in human resources and staff. You made those changes by laying off and by attrition, for example. You said by 2015 there would be 15,000. Was it 15,000 fewer? By 2015, how many fewer police officers will you have?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: Across the U.K. there will be 15,000 fewer. In my own force, we started with just over 2,000 police officers, and we will lose about 350 of those.

Ms. Candice Bergen: Our concern has been—and it's a question we ask often—whether we will be able to tighten our belts and bring down the cost of policing without cutting front-line officers. I know you mentioned you had been committed to keeping local police solving local problems. Did you have to cut front-line officers, or are you telling us you were able to find other inefficiencies?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: We largely found other inefficiencies, but the reality is that by the end of this spending review and maybe beyond when we are likely to face further budget pressures, there will, I think, be an inevitable reduction in the numbers of front-line officers. This is a political judgment as much as an operational one. From an operational perspective there are, without any doubt, more efficiencies that can be made. The political judgment is around the question of the numbers of police officers, which the public is very wedded to.

We can definitely make efficiencies, but there will be a reduction in the number of front-line officers. The political judge—

The Chair: We lost him.

All right. If we're going to have a minute or two, we have a committee business issue that I would like to very quickly deal with.

Do you think we're going to get a feed back right away?

Ms. Candice Bergen: Hi. You're back.

I have one minute left, sir. So go ahead if you had any other thoughts on that.

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: I think we were discussing the issue of the reduction in front-line officers. There is definitely a political dimension to that, which the U.K. government has decided it's prepared to face. I don't think that's an easy political decision, but it's one that has been taken here. That's the same across other parts of the public sector as well. The challenge for people like me is to try to maintain front-line operational delivery, visibility, and accessibility, and to make the efficiencies wherever we possibly can in back-office functions.

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

We'll move to the opposition.

We'll go to Mr. Garrison, please, for seven minutes.

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

Thank you for being here this morning.

I don't honestly know much about Staffordshire policing. When this process started, were your policing levels significantly different from those in the rest of Britain, and are you primarily an urban policing situation?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: We have urban and rural areas within Staffordshire. Police forces within the U.K. vary in size fairly significantly, and we are exactly mid-table in relation to the size of the police force. There are some police forces—about 20—that are bigger than we are and about 20 that are smaller than we are.

Mr. Randall Garrison: In terms of the ratio of police to population, generally in Britain it has been about 50% higher than in Canada. There are various figures. I think it is around 300 police per 100,000 , and in Canada it's somewhere around 200. Would the number for Staffordshire be any different from that kind of ratio in Britain?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: I don't have those figures to hand, but from experience of going over to Ottawa recently, I think those numbers you've suggested there are accurate.

● (0905)

Mr. Randall Garrison: It's interesting to me that you're starting from a much higher rate of staffing at the police level than we would be starting from here in Canada with relatively similar crime rates. Would you say that's true? There may be some differences in particular kinds of crime but we have relatively similar crime rates?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: Yes, my understanding is that crime rates were similar. And the crime patterns appear to be similar in terms of reductions as well, and public confidence figures also.

Mr. Randall Garrison: You say that you're relying a lot on special constables, who are volunteers. Can you talk about what kind of training they receive?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: We use two types of volunteers. The first are special constables. They have full police powers. They wear uniforms. They have powers of arrest and all the powers of a constable. They have training in law. They have training in operational activity. They have safety training and the like. So they have the training of a constable.

They're normally deployed alongside regular officers, and they work also within our communities, in our rural areas, and in our town centres, and will police, also, special events—carnivals, parades, those sorts of things.

We do use the special constabulary regularly. We've increased our numbers significantly, but I want to get to a position where we do not rely on them for core delivery. They are an added extra to what we do. I think a reliance upon volunteers is highly risky in the areas we're working in.

The other types of volunteers are non-sworn officers, and these are people who may fulfill functions in support around administration, around some work within police stations and the like. But we are fairly new to the concept of volunteering, and we're working through that at the moment.

Mr. Randall Garrison: In terms of those who wear a uniform and work alongside police, I have two questions. One, since they are volunteers, who bears the cost of that training? Second is a question of liability: who bears any liability if they're involved in things like arrests?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: The answer to both questions is that we bear both of those things, the cost of training and equipping. The return on investment, of course, is highly attractive, because whilst the training and equipping of officers does require initial outlay, the amount of hours that some of these special constables work is truly amazing, and the amount of time they give up. There are fantastic examples of the work they do in our communities.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Do they do that work because they see it as a path into professional policing jobs, or why would they put in those long hours as volunteers?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: Yes, there are broadly two different motivations. For some people, absolutely, they see it as a way to becoming a police officer, although they do recognize that recruitment has dried up and is likely to be very slim for the future. But secondly, also, many of them do it out of a sense of public service. A large number of special constables are very happy in another career but do this because they want to add something to their community.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Could you give us an idea of the gender and age profile of the people who volunteer?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: There's roughly a 50-50 split in terms of men and women. The age profile is...I couldn't give you that precisely. It kind of mirrors our regular officers. We have people maybe not quite as old as me—in fact, I think some might be as old as me. But we also have many young people working with us as well.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Moving on, then, you talked about how you work with KPMG on the efficiencies. Is that work they have done work that's been published anywhere? Are there reports on the work they've done with you or similar reports that we could get access to?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: I could certainly give you access to reports on the work they've done here in Staffordshire. I think they have published and showcased work in conferences and the like, and we have contributed to a journal. Again, I'd have to research that and get that to you. The short answer is yes, there are published results, and yes, I could get that to you.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Is your work with them ongoing, or has that work essentially been completed?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: That's completed now. And the crucial bit, which I would want to emphasize, is that they built capacity. The business process re-engineering that we began with them, that continues, but with our own staff now because KPMG has left us.

● (0910)

Mr. Randall Garrison: If I have just one minute left, you talked about better collaboration or more collaboration, I think, with other social service agencies. When we hear from police here in Canada, we hear that only about 20% of their calls for service are for what most people regard as crime, and that about 80% of the calls here are for social service, for mental health problems, or addiction problems. Do you have a similar ratio?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: Absolutely. If I had a group of front-line operational police officers sitting in the room with me now, they would want to tell you about the demands of mental health on policing services.

If you included drug and alcohol addiction, which are mental health issues, it is nearly overwhelming, and we are having discussions at the highest level of government between the Home Office and the Department of Health as to where that burden should properly sit.

We're talking about very vulnerable people who need help, and very often the police force are the agency of first and last resort.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Chief.

We'll now move to the government, to Mr. Hawn, please.

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Thank you, Chair, and thanks so much, Chief, for joining us.

I have just a comment. We compare numbers of police officers per hundred thousand and so on. I think we have to be careful that we're comparing apples and apples because police may be categorized in different ways—your special constables, for example. I think we need to be a little bit careful about making a straight, side-by-side comparison.

I do have a couple of questions on your special constables. You talked about starting with 2,000 regular police officers, and your special constables are in addition to that, or part of that?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: They are in addition to that.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: About how many special constables would you have?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: Now I think we have about 500.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Wow. Okay. So they do a lot of work.

How long do you plan to not recruit for? Have you thought ahead?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: Yes. We've changed our police governance arrangements in the U.K. very recently. I used to be answerable to a police authority of 17 people, some of whom were elected. We've now moved to a single individual, a directly elected police and crown commissioner, to whom I'm accountable, and that person holds the budget.

I have agreed with that individual that we will have very limited recruitment this year, so we're looking at recruiting about 30 officers this year.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: How concerned are you about a bubble down the road when you have a hole in recruiting like that, because that will create a bubble 20 to 25 years down the road?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: Absolutely. I think that is the single most serious strategic threat we have.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Right.

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: And I think that is why I've been very keen to begin any form of recruitment to deal with that threat.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Okay. I think that's wise.

When you talk about capacity building in KPMG and passing that capacity building down to your force, is that limited to a certain number of people in specific jobs, or is it something you try to instill across the force?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: It's a limited number of people because the work is very specialized around business process mapping and then there's the re-engineering of that.

We have a team of about 15 people now who continue to work on that and other things around corporate improvement for us, and they have all been trained. KPMG sat alongside them to learn that trade.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: And they are carrying on their regular police duties while they are doing that?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: They are not police officers. They are members of the police staff.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: I understand. Thank you.

You mentioned single crewing. There's obviously some risk involved with single crewing. How much single crewing do you do and how do you determine whether it's going to be dual or single? What's your assessment of the risk?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: We do risk assessments, and I encourage supervisors to do dynamic risk assessments.

On the issue around threat to officers here, I can't speak in terms of comparing it to Canada. What I can say in the U.K. is that overwhelmingly our officers are unarmed, but they have protective equipment. We work on the basis that if they are going to an incident that appears as though it carries risk to it, we would send a double-crewed vehicle. We have them available to us, but they are very much the minority. Ordinary patrolling is usually undertaken by individual officers, and the evidence is over a period of time that the risk is minimal.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: You talked about time wasted in the arrest and processing cycle and so on, and that's the same challenge our people face here.

How much were you able to reduce that by? You talked about that, but how much were you able to reduce it?

● (0915)

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: We were able to save—and again apologies, I don't have the figure here—many thousands of police officers' time over a period of a year, not just through that process, but also in terms of how we dealt with calls for assistance.

We recognize that in many calls for assistance, the member of the public was more than happy for that to be dealt with by a telephone resolution rather than the deployment of officers. We have watched very closely our public satisfaction levels, which we measure after every contact, and they haven't slipped as a result of that.

We looked at things like how we deploy officers to incidents and how we manage public interaction, so we've introduced a diary arrangement, managed appointments, where that is appropriate rather than an immediate response. Obviously there are times when we need to respond immediately, and we do that. Again, it's saved thousands of officer hours.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Thank you.

Your approach to the neighbourhoods is the right one, as per your comment on this, the political dimension. If people are happy in the neighbourhood and they have access to police officers...but if they're unhappy, that will filter up. If they're happy that's probably a good political move, writ large, I would say.

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: Yes.

When I was able to say at the beginning of this process that we wouldn't lose any neighbourhood officers, that went down very well with local communities.

The reality is, and I passionately believe this, that everything we do in terms of the big stuff—counterterrorism, murder investigations, serious and organized crime—is all predicated upon solid relationships with our communities. Those relationships are developed by local neighbourhood officers.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: It's the “fixing the broken window” approach from New York City years ago.

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: Yes.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: You're outsourcing a lot of back-office duties and so on. Is there any concern that some of the those duties might have been useful in taking somebody off front-line policing, who may be in a period of stress for whatever reason, to allow him to do something a little less stressful but to bring him back later? Do you have any concerns about losing that flexibility?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: Yes. That's a really good point.

We've chosen not to outsource a lot of our functions here in Staffordshire at this point. I'm not ruling this out for the future. For the time being, what I wanted to do was to make sure we reaped all the efficiency benefits we could before we engaged a private company to come and take those efficiencies off us and claim them for themselves.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Okay.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Our time is up.

We'll move over to Mr. Cotler, please, for seven minutes.

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for being with us today.

My question is really this: as a network of some 40 individual police forces rather than a national police service, how do you address—you were referring to these issues, so I thought I would ask how you address them—national concerns such as terrorism concerns? This would be in terms of matters of information gathering, intelligence sharing, and coordinated enforcement, etc.

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: The vast majority of policing in the U.K. is delivered by the 43 separate local police forces in England and Wales. There are only two parts that would have, to use a Canadian phrase, a federal approach, I suppose in that sense. There is a national approach to counterterrorism, which is led by the Metropolitan Police Service in London. Its assets are deployed around the country in counterterrorism hubs. My police force is in the Midlands of England. We have a counterterrorism hub that works with us very closely.

Also, overlaid upon policing, we have what is currently called the Serious Organised Crime Agency. That will disappear this year, and we will have a national crime agency developed. That will deal with the most serious and organized crime that goes across borders.

Broadly speaking, we have two approaches that we have. One is that we need to collaborate, and we do collaborate with other forces that abut us because criminals don't respect our boundaries. We also need to engage, and do engage, with a national counterterrorism effort, which sits on top of us and the National Crime Agency.

● (0920)

Hon. Irwin Cotler: Would you assess the terrorism threat as increasing or remaining the same, and in what manner has it changed over the years?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: It certainly has changed. Over 20 years ago when I joined the police force, the terrorism threat was principally around Irish republicanism in the U.K. It has now unquestionably moved across to radical Islamist threats. That definitely has a significant footprint in the U.K. In my own force, it has a significant footprint. It is an abiding threat. It is not going away. I think it will be with us for a generation. We need to build our policing intelligence and operational response around that threat.

Hon. Irwin Cotler: Do you have recommendations you can give to us on that issue, as to how to address and redress that? These are common concerns that are developing in different jurisdictions.

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: In the principal recommendation I have, I go back to my passion for local policing. These terrorists work in local neighbourhoods. When the London tube bombers bombed London some years ago, we know now that their behaviour changed in their local communities.

What we need to have is the trust and the confidence of local minority communities so that when people's behaviour does change, when there are extremists operating amongst them, they have confidence in local policing to pass that intelligence to local law enforcement agencies.

Then any counterterrorism effort has to be built upon the foundation of local policing. It cannot be something that comes in, and if you like, hits and runs. Because when terrorism arrests are made, local officers need to continue to work within those communities at a time of increased tension and volatility to continue to build those relationships of trust. That's what I think will defeat local terrorism.

Hon. Irwin Cotler: Thank you, I had a particular interest in that issue because I was in London of the time of the London bombings and I felt that was a kind of tipping point in terms of both the understanding of and approach to terrorism.

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: I think your assessment of a tipping point is absolutely right.

Hon. Irwin Cotler: I think my time might be limited. If I may, let me ask you how complaints with respect to police officials are handled and whether you have any appreciation of the nature of the complaints, the frequency in that regard.

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: Yes. I also have a responsibility nationally for leading on this area for the Association of Chief Police Officers in the U.K. I can tell you that the profile of complaints is handled predominantly within local police forces because overwhelmingly they are about things like rudeness, incivility, lateness, those sorts of service issues.

When matters are more serious, and these thankfully are fewer and farther between, we have an Independent Police Complaints Commission to which these more serious matters are referred, such as death following police contact or an allegation of corruption, those sorts of things. The Independent Police Complaints Commission can do one of two things: they can independently investigate that, and they would do this for very serious matters, or they could manage an investigation and oversee a police force investigating that locally.

Overwhelmingly, complaints need to be dealt with by local supervisors because very often it is just an officer getting something wrong that needs to be put right with a simple “sorry” and service recovery.

Hon. Irwin Cotler: Would you say there's a general satisfaction with the way matters relating to police complaints are handled and resolved?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: I think there's a general satisfaction but I think there are obviously people who if they were sitting here would say they're dissatisfied with it because they have some mistrust in policing.

The integrity of U.K. policing is something that the home secretary is very focused on at the moment and matters around the transparency of U.K. policing, of gifts, hospitality, relationships with the press, etc., are all under a lot of scrutiny at the moment. There is a big push, which I support, for enhanced transparency on the part of policing and I'm very up for that challenge.

● (0925)

The Chair: Thank you, Chief Cunningham. We'll now move to Madam Doré Lefebvre.

You have five minutes.

[*Translation*]

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

Thank you for taking part in our committee meeting, Chief Cunningham. I very much appreciate it.

I would like to briefly go back to what my colleague, Mr. Garrison, mentioned about mental health at the end of his questions. There were some comparisons with the problems our police forces see in our country in this regard. You seem to have the same kind of challenges. Do you work with various stakeholders in the community?

I am also curious to know how police officers in the United Kingdom manage this type of situation.

[*English*]

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: Absolutely. This is a significant challenge to us. At the moment we are not working enough with key partners. We need to engage the health sector far, far more than we have in relation to resolving these issues with some of the most vulnerable people we come across.

There are some pockets of good examples. In my own force, we have community psychiatric nurses who work within our custody areas. When a person comes into custody with clear mental health issues, they can have an immediate referral to a mental health professional. We also are looking for those psychiatric nurses to provide telephone support to officers who are at an incident and dealing with somebody who clearly has mental health issues. That may be somebody who is contemplating suicide or who is in serious distress.

I would like to move to how we think about actually deploying mental health professionals alongside police officers to incidents that would benefit from their expertise. Far too often our communities now are relying on police officers to do things they are simply not trained to do.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: I understand.

You mentioned that you are currently going through a period of budget cuts and that you will be unable to renew your police forces for a number of years. Is it a huge challenge to deal with this difficult situation, and at the same time, find the staff required to provide mental health services? How do you find the resources, and where do you find them?

[*English*]

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: Absolutely, resourcing is a major challenge.

There is a saying that you shouldn't waste a good crisis. The crisis we are in at the moment is helping us to have very difficult conversations with the health professionals—who are also having financial squeeze—to step up to the plate and do what they are paid and trained to do.

This has to happen, not just at my level but at the most senior levels of government. The Department of Health and the Home Office have to get around the table and work this one out. We are lobbying government very strongly to have those discussions much more effectively.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: I see.

Chief Cunningham, there is something else I would like to know.

In our country, there are young people who join street gangs and organized crime. We have programs to deal with this.

How do you work with young people? Do you raise awareness? How do you try to get them out of these circles?

[*English*]

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: It's a really important point. We do have officers who work with young people. We look to identify early those people who may be at risk of becoming involved in criminality.

There is more to do on this, but there are two significant pieces of work that I'd like to mention. One is work around problem families. We find that a problem family is a family who might call upon education services, police services, health professionals, and social services at different stages of their difficulty. What we need to do is have a much more comprehensive joined-up approach across agencies for dealing with that family. I think the evidence is that within that family there will be an increased vulnerability to becoming a criminal or being the victim of a crime or having mental health issues, as we've described, all within that family.

Some work was done recently by a colleague in another police force, and for one particular family, in terms of the police service calls for assistance, it would have been cheaper to have posted a police officer with that family permanently than to deploy as often as the force did once that work was undertaken. We need to identify these families. We need to work with them in a much more different way.

The second thing I'm very proud of is an approach to offender management. We work very closely on a project called integrated offender management, where the police officers work with probation officers, charities, health care professionals, and the like, to work with our most prolific criminals. They don't have any choice to be in our offender management program, they only have a choice as to whether they want to cooperate or not. If they don't cooperate, we will target them with enforcement activity. If they do cooperate, we will assist them with drug intervention programs, counselling, looking to help them get training, and diverting them away from criminality. Some of the early evidence is that it is a fantastically productive way of reducing criminality.

● (0930)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We're certainly learning some very interesting concepts in the new way of policing, if I could say “the new way”.

Mr. Norlock, please, you have five minutes.

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

And through you to the witness, thank you for being with us today.

I'd like to go back to the beginning.

You mentioned, when you were talking about some of the things you were doing to become more effective and efficient, building capacity instead of reliance. Could you explain that, please?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: That was in relation to private sector engagement, and consultancy in particular. Too often, I think, consultants would have a conversation with you that leaves you reliant upon them for delivery of too much. I think the conversation has to be different. It has to be about investing with a consultancy company, as we did here. Part of the deal is that they build capacity within the force to take on the work that they initiated. That was the point I was making.

Mr. Rick Norlock: Thank you very much.

Going back, I have a little bit of experience in policing. Some of the things that you have done—when I'm talking about “things”, I'm talking about looking at single-patrol vehicles. In Canada, because of our expanse, we have mobile offices called patrol vehicles, and an officer rarely, in some cases, gets out of it other than to see people. One of the things in the past, especially with a deployed police force in a more rural setting, was officer safety. We tended to team up officers. Some of the efficiencies that you've been able to extract of necessity...I'm just wondering what is the labour relationship model in most police forces? Do you have bargaining units? Do they have the right to strike? How did you work with them to have buy-in to some of the things that you've been doing with regard to efficiencies?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: It's an excellent question. This was a real challenge.

First of all, police officers in the U.K. do not have a right to strike. It is something that they give up when they join the police force. They have a police federation—it's not a union—that represents front-line rank-and-file officers. Each police force has its own police federation representatives.

I found the most effective way was to get them very close to the change program, especially the official representatives of the police federation. They were sitting on boards. They were sitting in projects, doing governance, and working with us to see what worked.

I also tried on the basis of “no surprises”. I have attempted, not always successfully, to be as open as I possibly can around the challenges that we're facing and the changes that we're making. I have discovered that not many officers needed to be persuaded of the financial challenge. In other words, once that had been set nationally, the cops understood that we had to change dramatically. In that sense, we got their buy-in. I'm not saying all the changes were popular—and some of them had to be enforced—but I think overwhelmingly we had a huge amount of support from officers who could see what we were trying to do.

● (0935)

Mr. Rick Norlock: Were you able to measure morale before and currently—in other words, before you had to take these actions and then after?

The second part of the question is whether in the cost reductions there were any impositions of salary cuts or freezes or changes to the benefit package, etc.

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: Three things have happened that have attacked officer morale. Nearly all of them are national interventions.

One is that there has been a complete review of police officer terms and conditions. This was a government-led program of work. It was undertaken independently by a guy called Tom Winsor, and the Winsor report, which is published, set out a whole new framework for police officer reward, recognition, and remuneration. That has been challenged by police officers, but it has been implemented. The government has forced that through.

Secondly—and this has really upset officers—there has been a change to their pension arrangements. Police officers now make a far higher contribution to pensions. They're not able to retire when they thought they were going to be able to retire, and when they retire they will not get the pension, in some cases, that they thought they were going to get. Those things have changed, and, again, they have not been popular.

Thirdly, the reduction in numbers has also affected morale.

The overall impact of that is that many of the morale issues, which I'll return to in a second, are directed not necessarily at me as chief but towards government. In relation to that, we benchmarked morale through a staff survey and that is something we're going to repeat. Anecdotally, I would say that morale has taken a hit, but also overwhelmingly officers recognize the need for change and are doing a fantastic job in very challenging circumstances.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll move to Mr. Rafferty, please.

Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Welcome, Chief Cunningham, to our committee this morning.

I want to talk about the public for a second here. Canadians' impressions of British police services I think are very high. I get mine through watching *Coronation Street*—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. John Rafferty: —and the police service there is very efficient and very polite. You say that the public impression of a police force, even though this big change has been going three years now, remains high.

I want to ask you a question about the move to a single commissioner. Are you concerned about the lack of public input now into policing in Staffordshire? What's your impression across the country?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: Yes, on the move to the single commissioner, the thinking behind it from government was to introduce much more democratic accountability: to have an individual elected by the public to hold me to account for delivery. Whether that is best served by one person or by a committee of people is a very debatable point.

The position of chief officers has been that it is not for us, as senior police officers, to decide how we should be held to account. That is an issue for government. They have decided, in the face of quite a lot of advice, that the move to an individual was their preferred choice. They've gone to it. It's new, it's still finding its feet, and it appears to be manifesting itself differently in different police forces across the country. I think there are definitely questions that need to be answered in relation to it, but we, as senior police officers, are going to try to help make it work effectively.

● (0940)

Mr. John Rafferty: Thank you for that answer.

Moving to privatization, without talking about other police services, perhaps you might have some anecdotal stories. It seems to me there would always be a concern about privacy and privacy issues as you move from sworn officers to the private sector. Has that been a concern? Is it a concern for you moving forward?

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: Yes, I think—this is very much a personal view—the engagement with the private sector needs to be handled very carefully. I am not supportive of wholesale outsourcing, as I previously said.

I think there are many issues. We guard the reputation of the police service very preciously. You've already alluded to the fact that we I think enjoy a good reputation, and our reputation with the public is the relationship that makes us effective. Therefore, anything we do that cedes any of what we do to the private sector needs to be very carefully thought through and carefully managed. I'm not suggesting that it's a no-go area, but it's one I'd approach very cautiously.

Mr. John Rafferty: I have one more question before my time is up.

With cutbacks, technology continues to improve, and you have to renew your services. You don't want to have a police service that goes back to the Stone Age in terms of communications and everything else. Of course, with the increase in crimes of technology and white-collar crime that you have to deal with, it seems to me that it's going to be pretty tough keeping up with them as you continue to cut back, particularly in numbers of police officers.

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: Yes, I think you're absolutely right. I think crime types are changing, and we need to keep apace of that. We need to keep apace especially around technology and the like, but also, we need to think about how we can use technology to defeat those sorts of crimes and how we can use technology to assist officers to be more effective.

I think there is much more we can do in this area around keeping officers.... One of your colleagues referred a moment ago to the mobile office. It's those sorts of things that I think we need to be absolutely investing in to save.

I wouldn't want to leave anybody with the impression that these cuts have been easy; they haven't been. The challenges you outline are very real challenges, but they're not going away. We need to face up to them and find different ways of doing this with a lower cost base.

Mr. John Rafferty: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Chief Cunningham. Our time unfortunately has come to a conclusion.

We want to thank you. I will mention that our committee has passed a motion such that we may be able to visit Britain and see first-hand some of the changes you have made over there. That's not certain yet. We still have to go through the appropriate channels here, but certainly we thank you for giving us a little bit of an appetizer for what we may see if we do come over to see you.

I also want to mention that a number of times you've mentioned certain published research works and projects. In considering the answers to the questions today, if you ever want to expand in any way, even just by dropping us an e-mail saying, “Here is a work that perhaps I would suggest to your committee”, we would be very appreciative. We would look forward to it and welcome it.

Thank you very much.

Chief Constable Michael Cunningham: Thank you very much, and if you do come to England, you'd be very welcome to come to Staffordshire. I'd love to be your host.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Chief Constable.

We will suspend for a moment and wait for our next guests.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

● (0940)

(Pause)

● (0945)

The Chair: [*Public proceedings resume*]

I would like to call this meeting back to order. This is the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. We are continuing our study on the economics of policing in Canada.

In the second hour we have a witness testifying by video conference from Surrey, British Columbia. This is actually the second time that he's appeared, kind of. The last time we saw him, we didn't hear him. We saw him leave, we saw him come back, and certainly we had some difficulties there with the teleconference system.

Appearing as an individual today is Professor Curt Taylor Griffiths. He is the professor and coordinator of the School of Criminology, Police Study Program, Simon Fraser University. Professor Griffiths is considered an expert in the fields of policing, community, and restorative justice, corrections, legal reform, and social development. He has co-authored more than 100 research reports and articles, and we certainly are pleased that we can reconnect again today.

Professor Griffiths, we are ready for your opening comment. We have a committee looking forward to questioning you as well.

● (0950)

Dr. Curt Taylor Griffiths (Professor, School of Criminology, Coordinator, Police Studies Program, Simon Fraser University, As an Individual): Thank you very much. I appreciate the opportunity for you to hear me this time rather than just see me wandering around aimlessly in a classroom.

I will provide some backdrop comments that could serve as a foundation for our discussions this morning.

I think everyone agrees that we need to move toward the development of effective and efficient police services in Canada, but as an observer of this process over the last few years, particularly as the economics of policing have come more to the forefront, I'm not sure we're going about it in the right way. I'll offer some comments about that, and hopefully we can get into a discussion about what might be the right way.

As a consequence of our situation in Canada, over the last three decades we've systematically dismantled our capacities to do police research in this country. Back in the 1980s for example, there was a police research unit in the then-solicitor general's ministry that was very effective and turned out excellent work. Another thing that happened over the last 20 years is the federal government has stopped the funding for the series of university-based criminology research centres that existed from Halifax to Vancouver. Those are no longer functioning.

As a consequence, our research endeavours with respect to policing in Canada are scattered, and there is no coordinating effort. There are very few linkages among universities, governments, and police services. Research is often being done on a one-and-done basis, whether it's by private consulting companies such as KPMG or by university-based scholars who work on a single type of project and then move on. We really don't have a coordinating body. We really don't have a repository, if you will, for police research, and an organization, agency, or institute that could serve as a catalyst for facilitating these collaborative relationships, and equally as important, for the dissemination of information.

There is quite a bit of information on policing in Canada but it's often inaccessible, sitting on bookshelves or hidden away in academic journals. Again, the consequences of this is that when we start to engage in this dialogue about the economics of policing, in many respects, we are really wandering in the dark because we don't have access to that substantive body of literature.

On a more operational basis, the consequence of this is that you have police service boards and policy-makers making very significant decisions about policing, particularly with respect to police service boards and police budgets. Municipal councils as well are making decisions in the absence of any empirical research on the basis of any information. As a consequence, the discussion tends to start with a statement such as “Crime rates are down. Policing costs are up, so policing is too expensive and not sustainable”. Again, that oversimplifies the complexity of what we're talking about when we look at the issues related to policing.

The second point I would make is that in Canada we really haven't defined what I would term “core policing”. We really haven't decided what the police should be doing, and as well, what they should not be doing. If we want to talk about controlling costs in policing, then there is going to have to be some discussion about what core policing is.

Since the 1980s when we asked police services to start getting involved in community policing initiatives, they've expanded their role beyond that of strict law enforcement and crime control, which was something they were encouraged to do. As a consequence, police are involved in a variety of activities that are not necessarily strictly related to law enforcement. They're involved in prevention activities and collaborative partnerships, so if we're going to ask them to draw back from that, we have to have a pretty clear idea about what we want the police to do.

From my perspective, another thing that's happened that's affecting what police are being asked to do is we have a massive downloading going on.

● (0955)

Whenever a provincial government cuts back on social workers, mental health workers, probation officers, and other types of service delivery resources, at the end of the day, it's the police officers on the street who have to deal with that. I think that if we look across the jurisdictions in Canada, we've seen police officers being left with an increasing number of tasks that, again, are expanding their role and expanding their activities merely because they're the only agency available 24/7/365. At the end of the day, if there have been cutbacks in programs, oftentimes there's an increased demand load on the police.

Another comment I would make that's really important to bring up in our discussion this morning is about policing in northern and remote communities. One thing that has struck me over the last couple of years in watching this debate and actually participating in this debate on the economics of policing is that there's been very little mention about the north. It's a very southern-centric discussion, and having done quite a bit of work north of 60 as well as in the northern regions of the provinces, I think it's something that really requires our attention.

In a final comment here, it's important to realize that we're not talking about making widgets. We're talking about a pretty complex enterprise in terms of policing. Noticeably absent in these discussions as well is the community. In a lot of the forums I've been to, I haven't heard a discussion about what the community expectations of policing are, and what the community wants the police to be. I would encourage a community component as well going forward in these discussions.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Professor Griffiths.

We're going to move into the first round of questioning. I've just been told that Mr. Leef is going to open up this morning.

Go ahead, Mr. Leef.

Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Griffiths.

I was taking notes as you were speaking. You started catching up to the questions I was going to ask. You mentioned that there hasn't been a lot of discussion on the north. As a member of Parliament for the Yukon and a former member of the RCMP in the Yukon, maybe I'll give you an opportunity to share some insights on some of your work in the north and where you think the economics of policing discussion can take us there. Are there particular innovations or challenges that you see facing this discussion to move the southern-centric point of view away for a moment?

Dr. Curt Taylor Griffiths: Given your experience, obviously you're aware of some of the dynamics that go on, not only north of 60, but in the remote and rural northern parts of our provinces. I think it's basically going to require a different model of policing. The RCMP in recent years, for example in the territories, has tried to adapt and to deliver a different model of policing. In the Yukon in 2010, for example, there was a review of the Yukon's police service that resulted in a number of very significant recommendations. Two years later it's encouraging to see that a lot of those recommendations have been followed up on.

I think the Yukon provides an example of what can be done through a tripartite arrangement among the RCMP in that jurisdiction, the Government of Yukon, and the Council of Yukon First Nations to come together to really address an issue and follow up with it. I participated in providing materials for the review that was done, and I'm really gratified to see the work that's been done in Yukon. I think that it can be a model for fashioning a model of policing in Yukon that meets the demands of Yukon, which of course may be different from the Northwest Territories and Nunavut because there are significant differences even across the provinces.

I would say that the Yukon provides us with considerable optimism in terms of these kinds of collaborative approaches. The community is very much front and centre in those Yukon discussions.

● (1000)

Mr. Ryan Leef: I was just reading the progress report from Sharing Common Ground and you did note that many of the things that were listed as recommendations in the first report have been achieved in the update, which is great news.

You talked about what core policing is and then you said that the discussion hasn't been defined by the community. I was thinking, as you were saying that you hadn't defined what that is, about the Yukon example, knowing that, as much as we would like to—I say "we" as police officers—define what we think our role is when we're out there, really it's driven by the calls for services. It's driven by the community, the definition of what police officers should do. It's by and large out of your hands as a police service. It really falls into the hands of the community because they make the calls and we, as police, respond.

What are you seeing as the differences in the communities from an urban point of view of what their expectations of police are that vary from northerners' expectations or rural and remote Canadians' expectations of police service delivery from a community policing model perspective?

Dr. Curt Taylor Griffiths: I think it's pretty fascinating, as I said, having done work from sea to sea to sea in Canada. It's interesting because policing in the southern regions is what I would call anonymous policing. In other words, compare an RCMP detachment in Surrey, British Columbia—it's the largest in Canada and has several hundred members—to the one in Watson Lake. The policing in the north is high visibility, high-consequence policing whereas in the south, things are more diffused and more anonymous.

Obviously, police officers in northern parts of the provinces and the territories are very highly visible in what they do. As you know from your experience, the consequences of their decisions are potentially much greater, including in public perceptions about what those officers are doing—who everybody knows—particularly if you look at Nunavut where they're on duty all the time and highly visible.

There's incredible potential for communities to be involved, and they are involved. But it's high-visibility, high-consequence policing. I think what you're seeing now, in Yukon for example, are communities being brought into the process, to the point of vetting officers who may be posted to their communities. That's impractical when you get into the southern regions. But within that northern policing model, there are things you can do in the north that hold great potential. As you know, the demographics are different, the environment and the geography are different.

Mr. Ryan Leef: You'd be familiar with, based on some of the recommendations, the new relationship between Corrections and policing particularly when it comes to Corrections now taking over the cellblock services of the RCMP. They see themselves as playing a better role than policing services do in providing that care, and the aftercare, after arrest.

In your opinion, how significant is the relationship between policing and Corrections? We've heard, loud and clear, about the relationship between policing and social services, policing and EMS, policing and mental health service delivery—that front line. But then there's something that happens after. The justice system takes over, and people enter the correctional system and will eventually be released.

What kinds of things can we do in terms of the economics of policing, and how important is that relationship between our police and our correctional officers and correctional system?

● (1005)

Dr. Curt Taylor Griffiths: I think that's an area that holds considerable potential. Just as an aside; up in Yukon, I would argue that those facilities should have always been there, that the police should never have been taking vulnerable persons into cells. There should have always been something, another facility—which there is now.

What we're seeing in some of the jurisdictions across Canada is collaborative efforts between police and Correctional Service of Canada. There are joint partnerships. There are joint teams working together to identify and monitor high-risk offenders in the community, and there are relationships between federal parole officers and police officers. When I think of the economics of policing, I think partnership, partnership. When I advise police services, I often tell them to look for a partner, not to take sole ownership of these things. It's not part of what core policing is. So partnerships, I think, have proven to be successful, with mental health services as well, across the country. There are a lot of really good examples of that.

The Chair: We'll now move to Mr. Garrison, please, for seven minutes.

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

Somewhat humorously, I have to declare a kind of conflict of interest here in that I used Mr. Griffiths' textbook for more than a decade in my teaching and have benefited from his research both as a police board member and as a counsellor.

Given some statements made yesterday, I'm just going to take a minute to say that my public record as a police board member and on a council is very clear: I never supported any reduction or moved any motion to reduce police resources at any time while I was on the police board or on the council—just so that doesn't interfere with our discussions here.

Having taken that time out, I want to come back. I want to thank you for pointing out the problem we have with research about policing. One of the things we're trying to deal with as a committee is how we grapple with the lack of organized information about policing.

Do you have any suggestions on specific best practices you're aware of that we should look at, beyond the north, as you've mentioned?

Dr. Curt Taylor Griffiths: With respect to developing some sort of framework to bring some method to the proverbial madness, to bring together the research that's being done to facilitate these collaborative relationships between governments and university-based academics and police services themselves, I think we don't have to look too far. We're the only jurisdiction, really, of the G-8, for example, that doesn't have an organization that does this. You can look at Scotland, they have a Scottish Institute for Policing Research; the U.K. has a College of Policing; the Australians and New Zealanders have the Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency; the United States has a number of platforms and portals, which I'm sure you've heard from other presenters. We can learn from what they have done, particularly in this age of technology. You don't need huge infrastructure to create this.

I think it's possible. In the discussions I've had with the persons who are involved in these other initiatives, they're more than willing to share their best practices, as well as share what hasn't worked for them. I don't think that would be difficult at all once we decide to go in that direction.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thank you.

I'm going to pass the rest of my time to Mr. Rafferty.

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Rafferty, you have five minutes.

Mr. John Rafferty: Thank you very much, Chair.

And thank you, Dr. Griffiths, for being here with us today.

When we talk about the economics of policing, part of the exercise, of course, is the question: how do we do more with less? I'm interested in your remarks on northern and rural policing, in particular first nations police services. I don't know how familiar you are with those particular services, but they are, in general, woefully underfunded.

Depending on how familiar you are with first nations police services, I want to ask you: is the current model of those services working? Or is there a new direction that you might suggest for first nations policing, a new model, if you will, of first nations policing, keeping in mind that first nations policing is there as a step towards self-government? I don't think anyone would suggest that getting rid of first nations police services is the way to go because it would be a step backward in terms of that goal, but I wonder if you'd like to make some comments on that.

Dr. Curt Taylor Griffiths: I think if we look back over the last, say, three decades of the experience with autonomous first nations police services, which I assume is what you're referring to—

Mr. John Rafferty: Yes.

Dr. Curt Taylor Griffiths: —it's been mixed results. A lot of it is a reflection of larger issues that may be going on on that first nations reserve, in terms of leadership issues, capacity. Over the last couple of decades in particular, I know the RCMP and the two provincial police forces have really worked to help build that capacity and to assist autonomous first nations police services.

I think it's a matter of continuing to provide them with support, not only fiscal support but support in terms of leadership development, succession of leadership, and ensuring that they aren't isolated. Sometimes they tend to become isolated, not only because of their geographic isolation but also because they don't tend to be part of the discussion, as you mentioned. There's a number of different ways that initiative of autonomous first nations police forces—which, as you mentioned, is tied into the larger issue of self-government—can be enhanced. We have examples where it has been.

● (1010)

Mr. John Rafferty: Providing support is an interesting thing to say because of what's happened over particularly the last two or three years. I'm going to use northern Ontario as an example, with a few quite large first nations police services—one that deals with a number of first nations communities along the road system and the other one that is predominantly fly-in. Of course, you can imagine the financial issues that you have to deal with and that sort of thing. In the past, the Ontario Provincial Police in northern Ontario have been very supportive of first nations police services—and continue to be—but as their budgets get cut back, their ability to get into communities to help a single police officer, for example, or to get into a community where there is no police officer to help the first nations police service is becoming more problematic. I wonder if you could comment on that.

Dr. Curt Taylor Griffiths: Because the policing environment and the dynamics of policing in remote and northern communities is so different, any budget cutback has an exponential impact. When we're in the southern regions, some of it is muted and diffused a bit because there are other resources in place. But the impact and the hit —what it means in terms of policing in some of these rural and, as you said, fly-in communities—is exponentially greater. There are some models they may want to look at. Alaska, for example, has a village public safety officer program that's been very effective.

It requires us to take a look at some alternative models for having an in-community police capacity beyond just fly-in. There's a potential for that type of approach.

But I agree with you that when you get a budget cutback, the impact is going to be exponentially greater, particularly in communities that have high, I would just say, "trouble" in terms of the dynamics of what's going on in that community and the high needs of that community in terms of attention and people having access to assistance.

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

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

Mr. Parm Gill (Brampton—Springdale, CPC): Thank you , Mr. Chair. I also want to thank Professor Griffiths for joining us this morning.

I understand, Professor, that you have vast experience with countries around the world and their policing systems. Which country would you compare Canada to, and I'm wondering if you could describe why?

Dr. Curt Taylor Griffiths: That's an interesting question, because they're all so unique. But the one that comes closest to us, in many respects, is Australia. For example, we were just speaking about the Canadian north. Australia, obviously, has a large land area and small population.

The challenges of policing the northern territories are very similar to the challenges we have in policing the Canadian north. The temperatures are a little bit different, but the demographics, the social issues, and the geographic issues, as I said, are very similar, so I would say Australia.

Mr. Parm Gill: Thank you.

I'm also wondering if you are able to discuss the findings of your Vancouver Police Department's staffing deployment study, in which you were able to conclude that the force could hire 122 officers, as opposed to the 400 recommended, while still ensuring public safety and efficiency.

● (1015)

Dr. Curt Taylor Griffiths: The Vancouver operation reviewed the template for the kind of research that needs to be done in any police service when we start talking about the economics of policing. That review was triggered by an ask of over 400 officers by the Vancouver police to the municipal council, at which point the municipal council said, "Well, wait a minute, let's take a look and see what's going on with the Vancouver Police Department".

Police services need to be able to answer a couple of questions before they ask for any additional resources. First of all, how are they using the resources they have? Are they making the most efficient and effective use of the resources they have? Second of all, do they have the capacity to monitor that on an ongoing basis? So you get away from this endless series of asks to municipal council of "We need 100 more, we need 200 more." And then the municipal council will say, "What did you do with the last 100 we gave you?"..."Well, they're out there, they're busy, they're policing."

We went to the Vancouver police and we took a look at a number of different aspects of that police service. We looked at overtime usage, we looked at civilianization, we looked at patrol deployment. Another area we looked at, which is rarely looked at, which actually eats up most of the overtime in most police services, was specialty units.

With respect to deployment, one of the things we saw very early on was that Vancouver police had a 13-minute response time to a priority-one call. That would be something like a domestic assault in progress. The best practice is about seven minutes. Either one or two things is happening here. Either Vancouver doesn't have enough officers to get to that scene in faster than 13 minutes or they're not deploying their officers effectively and efficiently.

The request for 122 officers came from our analysis of how they were deploying their officers. We concluded that they were doing the best they could with what they had in this instance. They just didn't have enough. We went back to municipal council and said, okay, municipal council, what do you want to buy? You represent the citizens of Vancouver, what do you want to buy for a priority-one response? You have 13 minutes. Do you want to buy 11 minutes, 10, 9, 8 minutes? Then we provided the decision-makers with actual information that they could use to make a decision. So they decided to buy 10 minutes for now, at that particular point in time. Okay, you want to buy a 10-minute response time to a priority-one call, you'll need 122 more officers. They'll come back next year and they'll track this and show you the outcomes of having those additional 122 officers.

There are a couple of things that go on here. First of all, the police service develops the capacity to know what it's doing with what it has. Second of all, as importantly, municipal councillors, who often, through no fault of their own, don't know a lot about policing other than what they read in the media or see on television, get educated in terms of effectiveness and efficiency issues, and actually have some information they can use. But that's unusual. Usually budgetary decisions, as I mentioned in my opening comments, and policy decisions are made in a complete information vacuum. So that's how the deployment study developed in Vancouver, and that's what its objectives were. That can be replicated anywhere.

Mr. Parm Gill: How much time do we have, Mr. Chair? Two minutes.

A couple of weeks ago I think we heard from our departmental officials regarding the police summit last month. One of the things that came out of the summit was the achievement of the catalogue of initiatives, best practices, being developed and I guess this will be shared across the country. I must say I was somewhat surprised that this was not already in place.

My question to you is this. Are you aware of any other country that has this so-called catalogue? How may this benefit police forces?

Dr. Curt Taylor Griffiths: I think we have some good touch points in other jurisdictions. I mentioned the Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency. I mentioned a couple of platforms in the United States where they have these materials. One of them is Crime Solutions, and there are a couple of other ones where you can go online and they will provide a summary of a particular strategy and then have a number of different indicators about its effectiveness. You either get a green check or a red check against it.

Again, that's really good generic information to have. I think we can benefit from that. What I would like to see us do is build on that information that currently exists and create our own in Canada, because we have some unique aspects of policing in this country that don't exist, for example, in Scotland. I think we can use what others have done as a foundation. It's easily accessible on the web.

Right now, the problem is we don't have any place in Canada to bring all this stuff together, even in a central server, that would be accessible. As a result, we're relying a lot on U.S. research, U.K. research, Australian research, to make policy decisions in Canada. I don't think that's a very helpful situation. But, yes, there is.

● (1020)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Gill and Mr. Griffiths.

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

Hon. Irwin Cotler: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Dr. Griffiths, you mentioned the concern with respect to downloading, and you also said—not necessarily related to it, but I'm trying to make a connection if there is one—that we have not yet defined what core policing is all about.

I'm wondering whether the problem of downloading is making it more difficult to define what core policing is all about, because core policing becomes more diffuse precisely because of the downloading.

I'm wondering if you might respond to that.

Dr. Curt Taylor Griffiths: Absolutely. The whole issue of downloading really struck me in a northern jurisdiction where I was working. If people in a community called the social services line after five o'clock, on weekends, or on holidays, they would get a recorded message that said, “Hi, you've reached social services. We're not available. If you have an emergency, call the RCMP”. That really started getting me thinking about the downloading situation.

Municipalities often raise the very legitimate issue that a large portion of their budgets is being eaten up by police services, but the reality is that municipalities are generally only responsible for policing and fire and rescue. All the rest is provincial. As I mentioned, when provincial governments start cutting back, the cities eat it. Really. I think there needs to be a discussion between municipalities and their respective provincial governments about what the police should be doing and what capacities the police should have to develop to deal with it.

I should also point out that many police services have experienced challenges in trying to develop these collaborative relationships with provincial counterparts. There are often difficulties, and the police have been at the forefront in many jurisdictions of trying to develop these collaborative partnerships so they don't end up having to deal by themselves with, for example, the issue of mentally ill people on the street.

I think there needs to be a dialogue between the municipalities and their respective provincial governments. I don't think that dialogue has occurred, and I think the police end up having a lot of things put onto them just by default, at the end of the day.

And I do agree we need to have a discussion about what core policing is. Right now core policing is very broad, and it's not just about crime rates. It's about providing social services; it's about a lot of other things other than crime rates. That's the reason for my comments about getting stuck in this notion about whether crime rates are up or down and so whether we need fewer police.

Hon. Irwin Cotler: I wonder if I might ask you something about an area in which you have a particular expertise: the whole notion of restorative justice.

This used to be a concept about which there was a good deal of discussion and even modelling, 10 to 15 years ago. There's very little about it now. It may be this is also a casualty of what you described as the dismantling of our whole research capacity, which included the dismantling of the Law Commission of Canada that had recommended a good deal about the matter of restorative justice. I'm wondering what you might think if we went back, if we revisited it, if we invoked it, whether this might help to make policing more efficient and more effective.

And because I may not have time for a third question, I'm going to try to relate this to it, although it may not be all that related.

Yesterday a report was issued that was titled, “Those Who Take Us Away, Abusive Policing and Failures in Protection of Indigenous Women and Girls in Northern British Columbia, Canada”. It had to do with the whole question of the disappeared and murdered aboriginal women on what has come to be known as the Highway of Tears in northern British Columbia. What was disturbing about it was the two main themes that came out of it. One was that the RCMP appeared not to be protecting the indigenous women, but moreover, they also at times were themselves involved in violence against indigenous women.

Now I'm trying to link it maybe. Would a restorative justice approach be relevant here? I'm just linking it so I can put the two questions to you. They need not be related.

● (1025)

Dr. Curt Taylor Griffiths: How long do I have?

On the restorative issue, I think that again there are initiatives going on in restorative justice on a community-by-community basis across the country from the southern regions to the territories.

Unless you know the actual people who are involved in those initiatives, you'll never see the report. You'll never have access to who they are. Someone who's interested in northwestern Ontario and who is doing the same thing would not even know who's in Yukon doing it. Again, that's what I would make the pitch for, a clearing house of information, ideas, and people. So if somebody wants to develop a restorative initiative, here are the people who are involved in it.

There's work out of the U.K. and they actually say, “Here's a project. Here's what the results were. Here's where you can get the report. Here's who did the study. If you're interested, call them or send them an e-mail”. Really it's a matter of facilitating these connections.

Restorative justice plays out in all sorts of different ways across the country and it's evolved over the last number of years. Police have been very involved in many jurisdictions in restorative justice, in running family conferences. School liaison officers pull in kids and run conferences and mediations. Again, it's under the radar. I think there is potential to do more, but with restorative justice, a lot depends on the community context.

What we saw across the north with circle sentencing for example, is that some communities have the capacity and/or interest to become involved in these, and others don't for a variety of reasons.

You have to make sure that the capacity is there in the community to do it. I hadn't really given much thought to connecting it to the report that came out yesterday. I've read through the materials, and using restorative justice as a way to address the issues that were raised in the report, I think, remains an obvious possibility.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Professor Griffiths.

Just on that, I think in your response to Mr. Cotler's question, you were talking about the clearing house for information and you said there is a report in the United Kingdom about how the project is evaluated, how it worked, and how it didn't work. Do you know how we could access that report?

Dr. Curt Taylor Griffiths: I don't have the link with me today, but if you give me a contact, I can send that information to you this afternoon.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll now move back to Madam Lefebvre for five minutes.

[*Translation*]

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

Mr. Griffiths, thank you very much for your presentation today. You have brought some extremely interesting elements to the committee's study.

There are so many things. It is difficult to go over everything in five minutes.

You said something that struck me in your opening remarks. You spoke about the fact that we should be asking ourselves what the police should do and should not do, and what kinds of things police should not do.

Do you have any interesting solutions to suggest to the committee?

[*English*]

Dr. Curt Taylor Griffiths: I think a number of initiatives would be helpful. First of all, as I mentioned, there needs to be a dialogue between the municipalities and their provincial and territorial governments about the downloading issue.

Second of all, there needs to be a mechanism to bring in the community to these discussions. My experience in doing community group work and running focus groups in communities is that most people have no idea what the police do. They rarely see the police except on a traffic stop and they talk about whether or not they got a traffic citation, and everything else comes out of the media.

When you run a focus group with people in the community and you present to them the fact that they have to make choices about what their police service is going to do and that there are limited resources, when you bring them into that dialogue, you see that they have some really good ideas about how to do that.

My comments at the beginning of the session today were that the communities generally had been excluded from these discussions. Particularly the visible and cultural minority communities are generally absent from these general community, open-mike meetings, which I find not particularly useful or productive.

I think there are a number of things we can do to help define what it is. It's going to vary community by community; there's no one generic model for what the police should do or not do.

The other thing is that in some communities, the councils are willing to pay more, for example, for a "no call too small" approach, where police officers are maybe not literally getting cats out of trees, but are responding to all calls. It's going to be community-specific but I think the community needs to be provided the opportunity. As I just mentioned, I'm not a big fan of open-mike community meetings, because you miss a lot of the key elements of the community who won't show up there.

● (1030)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: I see.

You mention communities. I have a lot of questions about organized crime, street gangs and the mafia, which are present throughout the country. At a certain point, there was also the problem of the Hells Angels, who were practically operating at a national scale. I have questions about youth involvement in the vicious cycle that is organized crime.

Do we have the right tools to help our young people not get caught up in this vicious cycle? Do you think there are initiatives, a better way of doing things?

[*English*]

Dr. Curt Taylor Griffiths: Your point is well taken.

The objective is early intervention and prevention. Identifying at-risk youth is not difficult. Most police officers and social workers.... They usually come to the attention of various agencies and personnel. It's a matter of coordinating that response. Historically, there's been a lack of resources put at the front end of the system. We do spend a lot of money at the back end of the system if you look at what corrections cost in terms of running a correctional system; multi-millions of dollars. We don't put the money up front. We have examples of programs that divert kids who are vulnerable to being recruited by gangs. There are examples of programs that are designed to get kids out of gangs. But they are very sparsely funded and they're not very well known.

Again, because we don't have this central clearing house we don't know where to go to find out where to start. We end up talking to somebody in Los Angeles. That's interesting and there may be some commonalities. But I think there's enough that we should be focusing on solutions here. We can certainly be informed by other practices. There are specific program examples that should be part of a readily accessible online access tool.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: Could you give us a few examples...

Oh, I see that my time is up.

Thank you very much.

[*English*]

The Chair: Sorry about that. I almost gave you seven minutes instead of five; that would be a terrible thing.

We'll now move back to Mr. Norlock, please.

Mr. Rick Norlock: Thank you very much.

Through you, Mr. Chair, to the witness, thank you for appearing today.

I was very much interested when you used the phrase in your opening statement, "doing more with less". That's not something new to me. In the mid-1990s when the federal government reduced by $25 billion some transfer payments to the provinces it resulted in a deployed police force that I worked for doing exactly that. That was the common phrase by our commissioner, "we have to do more with less", and we did more with less.

One of the items that you may have alluded to but didn't come to specifically is you were talking about all the things that we expect police forces to do. Some of the costs, or the increase in costs, were as a result of specialization. You must be aware, and can you comment on this, that in Ontario the reason we have specially trained officers for investigating sexual assaults.... In domestic abuse scenarios there would be a first officer responding but the follow-up would be by specially trained officers. All of these items come as a result of people like us and more so coroners' inquests, where the result is "the police should do this, the police should do that, and the police need more training for mentally ill people". All of these things add incrementally to the cost of policing. Then we have economic downturns where everybody's budgets are being squeezed. Then somebody comes up with a bright new idea that maybe the police shouldn't do that and maybe they should be better trained people. So what's old is new again and all those sorts of things and we're back down to the 1990s. Could you comment on that?

Second, there's nothing new in policing about reducing costs. I can recall in my locality where we took three detachments and put them under one administrative roof. I can recall in a budget in a small county reducing policing costs by $5 million by putting fewer supervisors under a bigger administration and therefore being able to keep more front-line officers.

What's all new about this? We've been doing it for a long time.

● (1035)

Dr. Curt Taylor Griffiths: I think what's new about it is just the fiscal pressures, which I think are much greater. I think the days of the blank cheque, obviously, are over for police services. Some police services understand that. Some police services in Canada have developed the capacity to go before police boards and municipal councils and say, "Here's what we're doing, here's how we're cutting costs, here's how we're monitoring our overtime, here's how we're making sure we are deploying our officers effectively", and other police services don't have that capacity. As a consequence, those services that don't have the capacity to generate that kind of information and to educate their fiscal decision-makers find themselves in a difficult situation.

You're right, efficiency and effectiveness have been there always, but the public sector in criminal justice, for example, has historically had more challenges in terms of developing the capacity to monitor what they're doing and how they're doing it with what they have, as opposed to the private sector.

The other comment I would make is this. We can't outsource our way out of this issue. I think that while private security has a role to play, while community constable programs have a role to play, I don't think we can outsource our way out of this. I know there's a lot of pressure to start outsourcing more and more as is being done in the U.K. Well, the U.K. experiment is still a work in progress. We're not sure where that's all going to go. They're turning over a lot of these activities to the private sector.

Mr. Rick Norlock: We had a chief constable from Staffordshire in here talking about just those things. He gave us some very good meat to chew on, shall I say.

I will go back to funding. Our government put $37.5 million into youth gang funds, $7.5 million into ongoing funding, and then we made a substantial input into the National Crime Prevention Centre. Doesn't the National Crime Prevention Centre do a lot of the things that you say we should be doing? What more could they do? Could we perhaps incent them to do just exactly what you said, a sort of a central agency to look at different ways of approaching policing and crime prevention?

Dr. Curt Taylor Griffiths: I think their mandate and the work they do are good. Their mandate is primarily crime prevention, part of the policing continuum. My suggestion would be that any project that's funded, whether it's through crime prevention or moneys that are given for gang intervention, absolutely should have an evaluative component. We're not going to build a database and information base about these programs—whether they work, how they work, under what circumstances they work, that kind of cumulative knowledge—unless we build an evaluative component. I'm not saying that pointy-headed academics have to do all the work. I think many police services now across the country have the capacity to do their own in-house evaluations of what they're doing.

The evaluative components often have been missing. A lot of the literature we have in Canada is very descriptive, “Well, we talked to 10 people and they thought it was a really good idea, and it seemed to have a big impact on everybody's lives”. That's interesting, but did it do what it originally said it was going to do?

I would make the pitch here for an evaluative component, and we can start building that information and knowledge base within our Canadian content—

● (1040)

Mr. Rick Norlock: Thank you.

The Chair: No, Mr. Norlock, I'm not going to let you go on to another one.

Thank you, Mr. Griffiths.

The last question of the day is going to Mr. Rousseau, please, for five minutes.

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

Thank you very much, Mr. Griffiths, for being here.

[*Translation*]

My first question is about the sharing of responsibilities.

In my riding, in the southern portion of Quebec, there is the Canada Border Services Agency at the ports of entry, the Sûreté du Québec, municipal police forces and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Because of limited human, material and technology resources, the municipal forces or RCMP sometimes have to support the CBSA.

How do you assess, and what do you think of, the sharing of responsibilities in these kinds of situations, especially since we do not have a truly comprehensive vision for our police forces?

[*English*]

Dr. Curt Taylor Griffiths: That raises a really important point. I think that there are ways, if you can get these parties, these different policing agencies, together and if you go in and take a look at that situation you described and ask what they are doing right now, how efficient and effective they are with what they're being given, and then where the efficiencies are...the efficiencies may be in one of the agencies taking certain responsibility and another agency taking another responsibility.

The problem is we don't have the kind of frameworks to look at these and say, are they being effective and efficient with what they have. Then you may be in a situation by saying yes—as we found in Vancouver—that they are being efficient and effective with what they have, and here's what they need to do a better job, and here are the metrics we're going to use to measure their performance.

If you asked me to come into that jurisdiction, those are the kinds of questions I'd be asking. That's the kind of information I would be gathering, to see where their efficiencies could be gained, how effective they are at what they're doing, and whether they are using best practices.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Rousseau: My second question is about demographic changes in Canada. Immigration, the aging population and even the rural exodus have influenced how police do their work.

Would you say that they have not really adjusted to these changes? Given the decrease and the end of research into policing, is there not a kind of block there? Would you say that police has not really adjusted to all these demographic changes?

[*English*]

Dr. Curt Taylor Griffiths: That's an excellent point. With the changing demographics and the kinds of demands that have been placed on not only police services but other agencies as well—and particularly with downloading a lot—a lot more is falling to police services themselves. I think police services are probably doing a better job than a lot of other public agencies.

If you look at the diversity of the officers themselves, we have increasing diversity in the ranks of police services across the country. The RCMP has been very successful in its recruiting efforts for diversity, for example. I think you have more police recruits who speak a second language than you do probation officers, parole officers, lawyers, or defence counsel.

I think the police are doing, comparatively speaking, a better job than many of their counterparts in the criminal justice system. That being said, that has to be built into the kinds of expectations we have of the police and whether the police have resources to deal with these changing demographics.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Rousseau: My last question may seem a little bit strange, but since I have a professor, a researcher, in front of me, I will ask it anyway.

Do you think incidents such as those of September 11, 2011, changed the priorities of Canadian police, in terms of border, land, air and marine ports of entry? Do you think this put a brake on research for developing a national public safety strategy, or do you think that it is the opposite, that it led to a comprehensive vision?

[*English*]

Dr. Curt Taylor Griffiths: I don't think they're mutually exclusive. Obviously following 9/11, community policing really took a hit. A lot more resources were poured into surveillance and more covert kinds of activities than existed prior to that incident. Now the way it's emerged is there's a new term or a more frequently used term, “community-based strategic policing”, which says that your patrol officers on the street are really your first line of eyes and ears for people who might pose, for example, a terrorist threat or a threat to security.

It has presented challenges, and I think that's just an add-on. That was something that came....it was a new event with a new set of consequences on top of what the police were already being asked to do. So now you have the police being asked to have these very highly specialized units to deal with the security threat, and then at the other end of the continuum you have patrol officers at three o'clock in the morning trying to decide what to do with a mentally ill person sitting in their patrol car because there's no place to take him.

Again, it's that expansion, just by default, with all these incidents, and there's really been no discussion about this. It's just kind of added on, as you suggested.

● (1045)

The Chair: All right.

Thank you very much, Mr. Griffiths. Unfortunately our time has come to a close here today. We certainly appreciate your expertise. We know that you are well regarded, and we thank you for your presentation today and for answering our questions. You've really helped our committee and I appreciate that very much.

We are going to adjourn, and we will see you a week after the break on the Tuesday morning.

Thank you, Professor Griffiths.

Dr. Curt Taylor Griffiths: Thank you very much for having me. I enjoyed the discussion.

The Chair: All right. The meeting is adjourned.