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Chair

The Honourable Judy A. Sgro

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• (1105)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.)): I call the meeting to order. This is meeting number 58 of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities in the 42nd Parliament. Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), we are continuing our study of aviation safety.

As witnesses today, we have, from the Department of Transport, Lauren Kinney, who we welcome back, Marie-France Paquet, and Mario Saucier; from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Joe Oliver, assistant commissioner, technical operations; from the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, Neil Parry, vice-president, service delivery; from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, Brian Rumig, assistant director, operations; and, from the Canadian Airports Council, Daniel-Robert Gooch and Jennifer Sullivan.

We welcome all of you. We offer our apologies for that delay of a few minutes, but one of our important staff is leaving Parliament Hill to take another job, and we wanted to make sure that he had a picture as a nice reminder of this great committee that he has helped to move along.

Thank you very much, Greg, on behalf of everyone.

Ms. Kinney, would you like to start?

Ms. Lauren Kinney (Assistant Deputy Minister, Safety and Security, Department of Transport): Thank you very much, Madam Chair and members of the committee.

I am the assistant deputy minister of safety and security at Transport Canada. It's a pleasure for me today to talk to you again about the department's role in protecting civil aviation from acts of unlawful interference and, in particular, about how our aviation security and transportation security clearance programs mitigate the risks related to persons working in restricted areas of Canadian airports.

Let me start by saying that aviation security is a key priority of Transport Canada. Our program's principal objective is to mitigate the risks related to acts of unlawful interference to the aviation system, which we do through a comprehensive set of policies, regulations, programs, and security measures that all work together to help protect air travel and trade.

For transportation security clearances in particular, I will give you an overview of the key components and the steps required for individuals working in restricted areas of airports in Canada.

Every individual who requires ongoing access to the restricted area of an airport must first obtain a transportation security clearance from Transport Canada. Before a clearance is granted, Transport Canada verifies that an individual does not pose a threat to the Canadian aviation system by completing background checks with CSIS, the RCMP, and, where applicable, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

As part of Transport Canada's ongoing vetting process, all transportation security clearance holders with access to the airport restricted areas are verified daily in a police database. When new criminal charges are identified, we take immediate action and can suspend or revoke the clearance of an individual. As part of our ongoing security protocols, more than 1,100 clearances were refused or cancelled at airports across the country between January 2015 and December 2016.

The restricted area identification card is a key component. Individuals working at airports who have been granted a clearance can then apply to obtain a restricted area identity card, or RAIC, which is issued by the airport operator. Simply possessing a RAIC is not sufficient for individuals to enter a restricted area. The RAIC must belong to the individual to whom it was issued. At most airports, this identity verification includes biometric validation, which ensures the person entering the area is the same person to whom the RAIC was granted.

Airport operators are responsible for maintaining effective access controls by ensuring that each person has a need and a right to enter that specific restricted area, and that persons enter only through the access points where CATSA screening is carried out. Employees awaiting their clearance and those who require infrequent access to an airport may be issued temporary passes. Every temporary pass holder is screened by CATSA prior to entering into the restricted area and is subject to escort requirements while in the restricted area. Transport Canada conducts regular inspections of RAIC and temporary pass requirements as part of a comprehensive review of procedures and practices with the airport operators.

Another key component is the screening of non-passengers—or workers at the airport. On top of a robust clearance process for people working in restricted areas of airports, those same employees are subject to physical screening requirements, both inside the terminal and when accessing critical areas near aircraft outside the terminal. These layers all work together to keep the system secure while ensuring that aircraft and passengers keep moving.

In conclusion, the continually evolving threat environment requires close collaboration between government, industry, and international partners. Maintaining open dialogue and information sharing can help address these challenges and strengthen the global civil aviation system.

Madam Chair, thank you for the committee's attention on this matter. I'm proud to have had the opportunity to highlight the excellent work performed every day to ensure that our country's air transportation system is safe and secure.

I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

• (1110)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Oliver.

Assistant Commissioner Joe Oliver (Assistant Commissioner, Technical Operations, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): Madam Chair and members of the committee, thank you for the invitation.

My name is Joe Oliver, and I am the assistant commissioner responsible for the RCMP's technical operations directorate. I'm delighted to join my colleagues from Transport Canada and CSIS to speak to you today about the RCMP's role in supporting the transportation security clearance program.

RCMP services include the security intelligence background section, which is mandated to perform law enforcement record checks, or LERCs, for various government departments and agencies, including Transport Canada. Like security assessments done by CSIS, the LERC reports provide Transport Canada key elements in the identification of individuals who pose a risk to security.

[*Translation*]

In the context of your study of aviation safety, I would like to briefly elaborate on the services the RCMP provides in support of the transportation security clearance program, including a brief overview of the LERC process.

[*English*]

In response to the evolving threat environment as well as recommendations of various reports, the RCMP established the security intelligence background section to provide previously unavailable criminal information to Transport Canada to strengthen its decision-making on issuance of transportation security clearances.

[*Translation*]

In 2009, the RCMP and Transport Canada signed a memorandum of understanding that enabled enhanced information sharing with the goal of preventing individuals who pose a security threat from accessing restricted areas at listed airports.

[*English*]

The LERC process is initiated when Transport Canada sends a request to the RCMP for applicants who have provided their consent. The applicant's information is queried against numerous law enforcement databases. If the search results in adverse information, a more in-depth analysis is conducted to confirm the validity and relevance of the criminal information. At the conclusion of our investigation, a report is forwarded to Transport Canada containing available and relevant criminal information to assist with its clearance determinations. The LERC plays a critical role as it does not only confirm whether or not an applicant has any criminal records of involvement in criminal or terrorist activities, but it also does an assessment of their associations. For clarity, the RCMP does not make recommendations to Transport on whether or not a clearance should be granted, revoked, or suspended.

Between January of 2015 and December 2016, the RCMP received almost 84,000 requests from Transport Canada, nearly 48,000 new applications and 36,000 renewals. Of those requests that were processed, 1,258 resulted in LERC reports identifying adverse information.

Now that you have a better understanding of the LERC process and some of the volumes, let me take a moment to highlight a few challenges.

Because this is a civil process, the information shared with Transport Canada has to be shared in some cases with the applicants. The RCMP is limited in what criminal information is disclosed in the LERC due to the sensitivity of ongoing investigations, the protection of undercover operators and human sources, or sensitive investigational techniques.

[*Translation*]

This applies also when the adverse information in question belongs to another law enforcement agency. In such cases, permission must be granted by the originator to release information to a third party, which adds additional complexity and delays to the process.

[*English*]

Our repository of information constantly evolves, and as such, our internal processes are constantly adjusted to ensure we provide the most comprehensive information in support of the transportation security clearance program. We continue to pursue the goal of consistent access to data sources from all police agencies across Canada, and the RCMP identifies and implements mitigating measures on an ongoing basis to reduce potential risks.

In closing, the law enforcement records checks have assisted in strengthening security at the airport in an environment where threats are continually evolving. With the information contained in these reports, Transport Canada is better positioned to make informed decisions to mitigate risks, which increases the security of the aviation system and reduces opportunities for exploitation by criminals and terrorists.

Thank you.

• (1115)

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

Mr. Parry.

Mr. Neil Parry (Vice-President, Service Delivery, Canadian Air Transport Security Authority): Good morning, Madam Chair, and members of the committee.

My name is Neil Parry, vice-president, service delivery for the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, CATSA.

As background, CATSA was established April 1, 2002. It is an agent crown corporation funded through parliamentary appropriations and accountable to Parliament through the Minister of Transport.

Responsibility for civil aviation security in Canada is shared among several federal departments and agencies, as well as air carriers and airport authorities. Specifically, CATSA is responsible for the effective and efficient screening of persons who access aircraft or restricted areas through screening points, the property in their possession or control, and the belongings or baggage that they give to an air carrier for transportation.

CATSA is regulated by Transport Canada, Canada's lead national civil aviation authority.

CATSA's mandate outlines its four core responsibilities within the realm of aviation security. We are responsible for pre-board screening, which is the screening of passengers; hold baggage screening, or checked baggage screening; non-passenger screening; and for managing the restricted area identity card program.

Given the nature of today's meeting, our focus on the screening of airport workers accessing secure areas of the airport, I'd like to comment quickly on two parts of that mandate—the restricted area identity card program and the non-passenger screening program.

As noted by my colleague from Transport Canada, in order to routinely access restricted areas of an airport, an individual must first attain the transportation security clearance that is managed and issued by Transport Canada. The authority that determines access privileges to the restricted area is the airport authority itself. CATSA manages the restricted area identity card program, which uses iris and fingerprint biometric platforms and identifiers to enable airports to validate that non-passenger's access privileges to the restricted areas of the airport.

Non-passenger screening refers to the screening of non-passengers accessing restricted areas at major airports. Non-passengers could include flight and cabin crews, airline customer service personnel, caterers, maintenance personnel, baggage handlers, and various other airport staff.

In budget 2014, CATSA received three-year funding to implement an enhanced non-passenger screening program to meet Transport Canada regulations that were in support of the International Civil Aviation Organization's standards.

In collaboration with airports, we have implemented enhanced non-passenger screening at access points within the main airport

terminal buildings and vehicles accessing restricted areas around the commercial apron. They are now screened at Canada's busiest airports.

With that introduction I'm pleased to answer any questions the committee may have.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Rumig.

Mr. Brian Rumig (Assistant Director, Operations, Canadian Security Intelligence Service): Good morning, Madam Chair and committee members.

Thank you for the invitation to meet with you this morning. I'm very proud to be here this morning to represent the employees of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, men and women who remain dedicated to the protection of Canada's national security interests and the safety and prosperity of Canadians.

This morning I'd like to discuss our role in the security screening of individuals who work in sensitive areas at airports.

I'll keep my remarks brief and will focus on our role in supporting Transport Canada and its transportation security clearance program.

Before describing the CSIS role in supporting Transport Canada, I believe it is important to note two points.

First, the service's role is limited to providing security assessments. CSIS does not issue security clearances; it is Transport Canada's exclusive authority to grant, deny, revoke, or suspend a clearance of an individual.

Second, I would like to emphasize that CSIS is but one partner providing supporting information to Transport Canada, as is witnessed here by the expertise in front of you today.

Madam Chair, members of the committee may be most familiar with our mandate to investigate and advise the government on threats to the security of Canada. Those threats are defined in our legislation as espionage and sabotage, foreign-influenced activities, terrorism, and subversion through the use of violence.

In the context of your current study, however, our security screening program, also a core mandate of our organization, is perhaps most relevant. Under this responsibility CSIS may provide security assessments to a variety of government departments and agencies in support of their authority to issue clearances.

As identified by assistant deputy minister Kinney, under the transportation security clearance program every individual who requires access to an aircraft or to a restricted area of the airport must have a valid security clearance as granted by Transport Canada. CSIS supports this program upon request by conducting security assessments of individuals requiring access to these sensitive sites.

To provide you with a sense of volume, our security screening branch received just over 80,000 screening requests from Transport Canada in 2015 and 2016. When a request is received, preliminary checks are completed against the service's holdings to determine whether there is any adverse information on the individual.

Should adverse information be identified, a variety of investigative tools can then be leveraged by CSIS. Most often these include conducting an interview of the individual. Upon conclusion of CSIS's investigative activity, a written assessment is provided to Transport Canada.

As or when required, Transport Canada may also request that CSIS reopen a file of a cleared individual, should there be cause to do so. In addition to that, should we ourselves become aware of an individual who already holds a security clearance and whose activities are suspected of constituting a threat to the security of Canada, the service can initiate its own investigation and review the individual's clearance.

Madam Chair, CSIS recognizes the vital public safety considerations that exist in the nations' airports. I would like to emphasize that CSIS works closely with Transport Canada officials to ensure that they have information about potential serious national security concerns. In doing so, CSIS continues to meet its obligations to keep Canada and Canadians safe.

With that, Madam Chair, I will conclude my remarks and would welcome any comments and questions.

• (1120)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Gooch, please go ahead.

Mr. Daniel-Robert Gooch (President, Canadian Airports Council): Thank you.

Madam Chair and members of the committee, good morning. The safety and security of our passengers and workers is the number one priority of airports, which is why we thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today on a topic that is extremely important to airports. The screening of airport workers, or as we describe them in the industry and as you've seen today, non-passengers, has been a topic of significant discussion between industry and government in recent years as Transport Canada has taken steps to enhance the Canadian screening program.

My name is Daniel-Robert Gooch and I am the president of the Canadian Airports Council. Our 51 members represent more than 100 airports from coast to coast to coast including large global hubs like Toronto Pearson and Aéroports de Montréal to much smaller airports such as those in North Bay and Sydney. I am pleased to be joined today by Jennifer Sullivan, Toronto Pearson's director of corporate safety and security and the chair of the Canadian Airports Council security committee. Jennifer also serves as vice-chair of the Airports Council International world standing committee on security, so she can provide some perspective on the global context as well.

Canada's airports are managed and operated by local airport authorities on a not-for-profit basis. This means that any operating surpluses they deliver are reinvested into the airport, and any increases in operating costs are passed on to airport users, including travellers.

In Canada, the screening of passengers, baggage, and airport workers is of course the mandate of CATSA, a crown corporation. While the focus of today's session is on the screening of airport

workers, we cannot tackle this topic effectively without discussing how CATSA is funded and approached overall.

While we have tremendous respect and support for the work that CATSA does, funding for CATSA is the single biggest operational challenge that airports face today. When the corporation was established in the aftermath of 9/11, government also created the air travellers security charge, a \$7 to \$25 levy applied to all airline tickets in Canada, and designed to cover the entire cost of the aviation security screening system, including the screening of airport workers. With the air travellers security charge, the government collects more than enough money to fund screening. In fact, in fiscal year 2015-16, the revenue from the ATSC was nearly \$110 million more than what was provided to CATSA to fulfill its mandate. However, passengers are forced to stand in longer and longer lines waiting to be screened. But it's also not just passengers who are waiting in longer lines; airport workers are as well, and this has an impact on operational efficiency and raises costs for all of us.

Meanwhile, government has approached industry about potentially downloading the financial and operational responsibility for the screening of airport workers, their vehicles, and belongings at an estimated cost of \$150 million a year. This is on top of more than \$25 million a year in security costs that the government has quietly transferred to airports since 2009. In the interests of providing value to travellers and improving transparency, it is our opinion that ATSC revenues should be fully dedicated to covering CATSA's complete mandate, including the screening of airport workers. CATSA also needs greater flexibility to collaborate on and innovate how it runs a sustainable business. For example, with a couple of exceptions, CATSA has no ability to raise revenue from functions like training or supplemental services for airports. We see this as something that could be changed.

For the past two years, the CAC and our partners in the air carrier community have worked towards a permanent funding solution for CATSA, one that can address the organization's entire mandate. This is why airports were pleased with Transport Minister Marc Garneau's Transportation 2030 speech in Montreal last November, in which the minister made important commitments to address many of the items we've outlined above.

Unfortunately budget 2017 failed to make any progress on these commitments. Most relevant to our appearance today, however, is that budget 2017 delays a decision on how to handle and fund the screening of non-passengers, the workers at our airports. It is important that we get this work back on track.

In that context I will now turn it over to Jennifer for some specifics.

• (1125)

Ms. Jennifer Sullivan (Director, Corporate Safety and Security, Greater Toronto Airports Authority, and Chair of the Security Committee, Canadian Airports Council): Thank you, Daniel.

Madame Chair, honourable members, I echo Daniel's thanks to you for the opportunity to be here today.

The screening of airport workers, as mentioned, has been the focus of the CAC security committee in conjunction with Transport Canada and CATSA for several years. We work very closely with our colleagues at Transport Canada to mitigate the operational impacts while achieving the security outcomes of the enhanced non-passenger screening program that is implemented at airports across Canada. The changes to the program, which involved about \$150 million in airport-funded infrastructure investments, keep Canada at pace with our international peers and in compliance with the requirements of the International Civil Aviation Organization.

As a result of the non-passenger screening program enhancements, we have what we believe to be a robust system of screening. Through recurrent biographical screening via the transportation security clearance, biometric identity verification provided by the restricted area identity card, and airport access control systems, in conjunction with physical screening through CATSA checkpoints, we are verifying in real time that people accessing security-sensitive areas at the airport are who they say they are and, through screening, are determined not to be carrying prohibited items.

The enhanced program also provides Canada greater credibility with international partners. This has allowed Canada to enter into mutual recognition security agreements with our counterparts in Europe and the United States. This eliminates the duplication of security screening for some transiting passengers, which in turn allows airports to offer more convenient and faster connection processes for passengers in a globally competitive marketplace.

Though we have a strong system of regulations and practices, in the broader picture, we need all federal partners to contribute to its success. In particular, attention needs to be paid to the transportation security clearance process, the foundational security check for all employees at airports who have access to restricted areas.

The Chair: I'm sorry, Ms. Sullivan. Your time has been exceeded. Could you get in your remaining comments in response to a question? The committee has a lot of questions, and we always make sure we allocate as much time as possible for those questions.

Mr. Berthold, you have six minutes.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I would like to thank all the witnesses for being here. We will certainly have a lot of questions for them.

Madam Chair, I would have liked to invite more people from the Montreal airport, given that the matter was first raised by the television station TVA in a report about the Montreal airport. Officials from the Montreal airport and the Montreal police were on my list of witnesses, but unfortunately they were not invited. I have accordingly put forward a motion. We will see how things play out and perhaps we will be able to invite those people. I might move my motion during the meeting, because I think it is important.

Concerns were raised in Montreal about the actions taken. There were media reports in Montreal about security clearances. The witnesses will no doubt be able to answer a number of my questions today.

My first questions are for Ms. Kinney. Transport Canada has a great many security screening requests from the various agencies. From the time a person requests a security clearance, how long does it take for the assessment to be completed and for the person to receive the clearance?

Ms. Laureen Kinney: Thank you for your question.

[English]

The elements of the process include the initial application through the airport, who controls the database, who is applying, and who is allowed to apply, because they're going to work at the airport. Then that application comes to Transport Canada. We go out through the RCMP for a fingerprint-based criminal record check and, as well, the background check in terms of the criminal intelligence activities Mr. Oliver mentioned. There's a security intelligence background section, so there is a set of inquiries at the RCMP. There's a CSIS check, which was mentioned by my other colleague, Mr. Rumig. We also have a Canadian citizenship and immigration check, depending on the background of the person.

When that information all comes back in, it's brought together, and it's assessed by Transport Canada. If something significantly adverse comes in at an earlier stage, we can obviously stop the process and make a decision at that point.

• (1130)

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Ms. Kinney, I understand the process well since each person has explained their part.

[English]

How much time does it take for an employee to receive his...?

Ms. Laureen Kinney: The time is completely variable. It's a very individualized process. Some people can have it as quickly as a few days, I would think. If there is no adverse information responded back, the majority of people would have their security clearance in a little bit longer than a week or two. Can you give me a number, roughly?

Ms. Marie-France Paquet (Director General, Intermodal Surface, Security and Emergency Preparedness, Safety and Security Group, Department of Transport): Actually, it depends on the time it takes to do all the work at the RCMP, so it does take a bit longer than that.

Ms. Laureen Kinney: Do we have an estimate of the majority, roughly? Are we talking weeks or months?

Ms. Marie-France Paquet: Months.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Months?

Ms. Laureen Kinney: To finish checking for a name if there's no adverse—

Ms. Marie-France Paquet: For someone who is a first applicant, yes.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Ms. Sullivan, since you are the one who has to wait for the clearances, do you know how long it takes on average for an employee to receive their clearance?

[English]

Ms. Jennifer Sullivan: For a new applicant, on average we're seeing between three to five months.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Three to five months?

Ms. Jennifer Sullivan: Three to five months for a new applicant.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: If I understand the process correctly, during that waiting period of two to five months, employees can receive a temporary clearance. Is that correct?

[English]

Ms. Jennifer Sullivan: Yes, that is correct.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: What checks are done at that time for temporary employees? How can you make sure that an employee with a temporary clearance does not pose a risk, without confirmation from the RCMP and CSIS? How can these people be allowed to access restricted areas, even if they are accompanied?

That is what I understood about the process. That can raise certain concerns for people working at airports.

[English]

Ms. Lauren Kinney: Madam Chair, there are two different processes that happen at the beginning. Some of the airports carry out criminal record checks themselves to check that first level of check very quickly themselves. However, in all cases where a temporary pass is being authorized, that individual must have an escort. There are escort requirements built into regulation, and Transport Canada provides oversight of that, so there is a protection built in. Then there are rules around what the escort is responsible for doing on behalf of the people they are escorting, the number of people, and what they must do to be effective.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: About 80,000 security checks are requested each year. You must have a service in each of your sectors exclusively assigned to conducting those checks. How many employees are currently cleared to work in secure areas at airports?

[English]

Ms. Lauren Kinney: Right now in our databases we have 169,815 active holders of security clearances. That was effective as of May 3, 2017. Not every one of those may all be working. Some of them could be on medical leave, etc., but that's the number of people with passes in our database.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: How many temporary passes are there?

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Berthold. I'm sorry, your time is up.

Maybe you could get that information for Mr. Berthold as we proceed with the meeting.

Mr. Iacono.

[Translation]

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

My question is for Mr. Oliver, from the RCMP.

How do you detect signs of radicalization among Canadians, and among airport employees in particular?

• (1135)

[English]

A/Commr Joe Oliver: Obviously, the RCMP has to operate within the mandate and the law in order to deal with investigations involving potentially radicalized individuals. In most cases that information would come to the attention of police either through proactive investigations or through information that is received from individuals within the community, in some cases it may be family members and in other cases it may be individuals who become concerned by the change in behaviour of individuals.

When that happens and that information does come to the fore, there is normally a multi-agency response in order to do an assessment on the potential risk and on what actions can be taken to mitigate those risks.

For instance, one of the initiatives of the RCMP was to establish a national security joint operation centre, which includes various partners at the federal level, so that information of potential threats that come in can be quickly assessed in a timely manner in order to determine a type of strategy. That could be a strategy that involves a full-blown criminal investigation. It could involve enhanced monitoring or surveillance of individuals. Or it may involve community-based initiatives with intervention at the local level with community partners.

In terms of specifics for individuals working in the airport environment, the RCMP doesn't monitor on an ongoing basis individuals in the airports. We have to operate within the confines of the law and we're not a police state, so often we rely on other mechanisms.

I'm aware that the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police has an aviation security committee. Most police agencies are aware that individuals working in an airport require certain security clearances. If information comes to their attention that an individual poses a potential criminal or terrorist risk, that is then referred to Transport Canada which can do a reassessment of that restricted access notification card. There are also other measures that Transport Canada has in place that can help mitigate that risk.

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Thank you.

[Translation]

What measures are in place to provide for quick and effective communication between the RCMP, Transport Canada, and the airport authorities?

[English]

A/Commr Joe Oliver: I can say that in areas where the RCMP is a member of the multi-agency security committee at airports, information is shared in terms of security threats and risks at airports. In cases where a threat is identified, it could be through the police of jurisdiction or it could be through the airport authority. It may even be through the aftercare process that Transport Canada has put in place. That information would go back to Transport Canada to do a reassessment and they may engage the RCMP to do a more in-depth law enforcement record check.

[Translation]

Mr. Angelo Iacono: My next question is for Mr. Oliver again, but also for the officials from Transport Canada.

I would like you to describe the sequence of events when a person who works at an airport is suspected of being radicalized.

[English]

A/Commr Joe Oliver: Again, there are a number of ways that may occur. If there is a suspicion that an individual is becoming radicalized, is radicalized, we go through our internal security process where we would try to assess that risk in a timely manner. Transport Canada would be involved in terms of re-evaluating the security clearance that they've provided. In some cases that may come directly from Transport Canada to the RCMP and we would do a new investigation around whether there's new information that has come to the attention of police from the time the initial clearance was issued to the time that a new suspicion or new concern has surfaced.

There are processes on an ongoing basis to monitor those who have Transport Canada security clearance, to initiate a review of those for cause.

Ms. Lauren Kinney: I would just add to that point, Madam Chair, that Transport Canada also gets individual reports. There may be concerns raised in a work environment, etc., so all of those would be passed, as Mr. Oliver mentioned.

The bottom line is that if that information comes to any of the agencies, it comes to Transport directly, and it can be an extremely quick situation. The individual director of the program has the authority to suspend those clearances while further investigation is carried out, and that is an action taken within a couple of hours.

• (1140)

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Thank you.

Ms. Sullivan, why would you put attention on the TSC process?

Ms. Jennifer Sullivan: I'm sorry?

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Why put attention on the TSC process? You were talking about that in your brief remarks.

Ms. Jennifer Sullivan: We were just going to mention the timelines. We were initially going to say that in 2012 new clearances used to take about a month, and now we're looking at a four- to six-month delay.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We move on to Monsieur Aubin.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thanks to the witnesses for being here this morning.

You know that this meeting was brought about by a slight wave of concern—not to say panic—raised by certain media reports. Reading or listening to your presentations reassures me. At the same time, they are full of turns of phrase that are unclear to me, although you no doubt understand them.

My first question is for Ms. Kinney.

You said that the transportation security clearances of employees who have access to restricted areas of the airport are checked daily. We are talking about more than 170,000 employees. What is the process? Are there two databases that are linked or is there human intervention at some point? How is it possible to check 170,000 employee files on a daily basis?

[English]

Ms. Lauren Kinney: There are a couple of elements involved in that, Madam Chair.

One element is that in the perpetual vetting component of the transportation security clearance, every day there is a check against criminal records to make sure that no new charges or new situations have arisen from a policing perspective. If there have been any, action may be taken either to inquire or potentially to suspend temporarily.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: If there is a new criminal charge, it will be in the police database, is that correct?

Ms. Lauren Kinney: Yes.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Before a new criminal charge appears in the database, however, it can take a number of months for you to receive the information.

Ms. Lauren Kinney: No.

[English]

We check that database every day for every name, all 169,000. That's why we're proactively checking every day.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: I am clear on the principle.

The ICAO has also called for stronger measures. It now requires non-passengers to go through a CATSA screening point before they enter a restricted area of the airport. Are all employees required to go into that restricted area or do they go there randomly?

[English]

Ms. Lauren Kinney: We have a system that is risk-based. What has been implemented is a random, risk-based approach, which varies and so is not predictable by the employees. We don't usually publish the percentages and numbers, but this is a well-developed, well-thought-out, analyzed process to implement this requirement.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: So I understand that not all employees are systematically assessed or screened. Is there a mechanism to automatically adjust security standards depending on the risk level?

[English]

Ms. Laureen Kinney: That's a very good question, Madam Chair.

If I think about the level of risk of the individual person, we generally treat it as systemic. We look at the background check and the physical screening together. That's why we have this risk-based approach to who should be screened. In effect, then, yes.

We've done a lot of work to say what the relative risk is. Take, for example, the security director at the airport. Is it necessary to screen them every time they go in and out, five or six times a day?

That's part of what's built into the randomness. There are levels of risk built into it, but in general once someone has access to the system, we try not to micromanage that element. It is, however, built into the system.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you.

My next question is for you, Mr. Oliver.

In your introductory remarks, you said that, in 2009, the RCMP and Transport Canada signed a memorandum of understanding to improve information sharing. In my opinion, an MOU is really a way of doing things. Is it just an MOU? What were the problems before and what has been improved as a result of the MOU?

A/Commr Joe Oliver: Thank you for the question.

I will answer in English, if I may.

[English]

Mr. Robert Aubin: That's no problem.

A/Commr Joe Oliver: Prior to the enhanced protocol or MOU that we signed with Transport Canada, Transport Canada did have access to limited databases. Through the 2009 MOU we agreed with a funded initiative that provided previously unavailable access to databases. So it's more comprehensive searches compared to what we were doing from 2004 to 2009.

This provided a greater access to information that would help Transport in its decision-making. For example, previously we probably checked about two databases, based on various risk factors. Today we check no fewer than five, and if there's any adverse information, we go deeper into additional databases. That's the enhancement.

• (1145)

The Chair: You have 45 seconds.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Okay.

I was also a bit surprised when you said that the RCMP could not make recommendations to Transport Canada with regard to withdrawing a certificate or not.

Is that correct?

[English]

A/Commr Joe Oliver: The RCMP will provide advice on, for instance...certain behaviours may be criminal behaviour. The RCMP will provide advice on what that behaviour may indicate but ultimately decision-making comes down to the Minister of Transport who has the authority to issue, revoke, or suspend.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Hardie, you're next.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Thank you, everybody.

CSIS and the RCMP, I am a little surprised that you have what appears to be to the average person a fairly passive role in doing the assessment and then just passing on the results to Transport Canada. I hate to stick you with a what-if question but I will.

What if you identify a bad actor, someone you think is a person who represents a risk but subsequently you learn that they have been granted clearance anyway. Do you have a mechanism to flag that? Raise it? Do something about it?

Starting with you, Mr. Rumig.

Mr. Brian Rumig: The answer is yes, we do. As I indicated in my opening comment, when new information is surfaced by Transport Canada or by ourselves or by law enforcement partners, we collectively mobilize very quickly to ensure that we have the best analysis and the best assessment of what that potential risk may be, whether it's a national security risk or a criminal risk in the confines of the RCMP's responsibility.

In mobilizing on that very quickly, there is a mechanism in place, an obligation in place, that we share information with the authorities, in this case, Transport Canada.

Going back to your specific question, if information does surface that would suggest to us that there's someone in the airport with a valid security clearance whom we now suspect may pose a concern, we mobilize on that very quickly. We reach out to Transport Canada.

We address our concerns to them, and then as Assistant Commissioner Oliver indicated earlier, a fused assessment process comes into play to determine what the next step should be. In this particular instance, the hypothetical instance you suggested, it could mean the immediate outcome is the individual's clearance is revoked or, rather, suspended.

Mr. Ken Hardie: By Transport Canada.

Mr. Brian Rumig: By Transport Canada and then an investigation would ensue either by the RCMP or ourselves and often in tandem.

Mr. Ken Hardie: I want to talk about contractors because the issue in Montreal appeared to have centred around employees of a contractor.

Do you assess the contractors, their hiring processes, their own particular vetting process, and if you identify a contractor who seems to keep sourcing people who don't qualify for security clearance, do remedial steps take place by one of your organizations to deal with that contractor?

Ms. Laureen Kinney: I would suggest that's largely an airport role in the sense that the airports manage the provision of allowance to the employees. They come through the companies. They generally would have the contracts to do work around them. If something like that were to arise, it would be noted. It would be discussed and we would do something with it but normally that would be generally visible, most likely to the airports at a more immediate—

• (1150)

Mr. Ken Hardie: You detect a gap here.

Ms. Laureen Kinney: Well, if it were to ever occur...I'm not aware that it's ever occurred. Perhaps it....

Ms. Jennifer Sullivan: I've never experienced a case where a particular contractor is hiring people who are continually denied or refused clearances. It's very much on an individual basis.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Who monitors the activities of people who have security clearance, with respect to photographs they may be taking, cellphone traffic in and out of sensitive areas, that sort of thing?

Ms. Jennifer Sullivan: That would be the airport security community. We have an airport security committee that is the RCMP, the police of jurisdiction, CSIS, CATSA, and Transport Canada.

We have a very robust security management system. You've probably heard of SMS, the safety management system. We have the same concept on the security side. We're responsible for developing security awareness training and full programs. We have a “see it, report it, prevent it” program, so the 49,000 employees are all responsible for tracking, reporting, and assessing any security risks, such as the taking of photographs or people in locations where they're not supposed to be.

We take that information, and if we do have any adverse information, we will provide that to Transport Canada and to the RCMP to say, “Here's what we've noticed.”

Mr. Ken Hardie: There's live video surveillance in most sensitive areas, isn't there?

Ms. Jennifer Sullivan: Yes, there is.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Thank you.

The Chair: You have one more minute.

Mr. Ken Hardie: One more minute? Great.

Commissioner Oliver, you mentioned that, in certain instances, you can't proceed unless you get permissions. Can you further explain what those permissions are and who they come from?

A/Commr Joe Oliver: In terms of the support it provides to Transport Canada, the RCMP relies heavily on the entire Canadian police community. For instance, there are protocols in place to allow the RCMP to do kind of an index check on 187 other law enforcement agencies' records.

When we come across information, because it's their information and there are third-party protocols that exist around it, we have to go to the police of jurisdiction and seek their authority to share that information with Transport Canada. In some cases, that contributes to the delays.

It may be that because of an ongoing investigation that is quite sensitive, they don't want to share that information and get dragged

into a potential civil process that is going to expose a witness, an undercover operator, or a sensitive police technique. We have to go back to the original police organization and get that information vetted with their concurrence. Once we get that information vetted, then we can share it with Transport Canada.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Fraser.

Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.): Thank you very much to each of our witnesses for being here today. I expect the bulk of my questions will be for Ms. Kinney, but feel free to jump in if you feel you have something to add.

There's been a little bit of talk about the TVA recordings with the respect to the Montreal airport. I find it difficult to have a conversation that has the words “terrorism” and “airport” in the same sentence without producing some kind of hysteria. I would agree with Monsieur Aubin, who has suggested there's more concern than panic at this stage.

I take some comfort in what I've heard today, and I want to seek confirmation. My understanding is that after the system unfolded—in my opinion, the way it should have—the security clearance was revoked for the individuals. The ones who worked for contractors aren't on site today. The ones who may have been employed by the airport are not on site today. Is this really an example of the system weeding out individuals who should not have had security clearance?

Ms. Laureen Kinney: I would say that, in this particular situation, we're still in the middle of a process. That process allows the employee to present situations that may explain why circumstances arose that caused us to suspend a clearance. It's important that we respect that process and their privacy as well.

I would say, in general, that this is the kind of situation that has come up in other cases. Something happens, and many things happen in an operational environment with all of these people, so very small things can sometimes happen, but they raise an alarm on the local level. They're reported to us, and depending on the level of severity—we've done this in other cases—we suspend the clearance while we seek out further information with our partners. In some cases, we may not take that action if it was not severe at all, but those are normal.

Mr. Sean Fraser: Certainly. How long have these sort of normal security procedures been in place with Transport Canada? Is this roughly the same thing that you've used for a few decades?

• (1155)

Ms. Laureen Kinney: Yes, the transportation security clearance program was established after Air India in about 1985. I believe we were the first ones in the world to do that.

Obviously, it has been continuously improved and enhanced over the years, but it's a very well-developed process, and it's quite the exercise. I don't think there have been major changes to these types of things in the last 10 years or so, since we got the biometric capability. We can cut off security clearance effectively within half an hour or an hour, if we need to.

Mr. Sean Fraser: Oh, wow, that's terrific.

In response to a previous question, you mentioned that you're doing criminal record checks daily, in massive volumes, which is hard to even comprehend. Of course, the ability to accurately seek a criminal record for an individual depends on the quality of the system that you are searching. I've heard, through testimony on other committees, that there are issues, particularly with CPIC records. Criminal records aren't necessarily being entered at the moment they happen. I understand there are some efforts, through the public safety minister's work, to bring these records more up to date.

Is this an area that we should be investing in and focusing on, to make sure that the quality of your process is yielding the results that Canadians deserve?

Ms. Laureen Kinney: From Transport Canada's perspective, I am not aware of significant concerns.

Mr. Sean Fraser: Mr. Oliver may be better positioned to answer this question.

A/Commr Joe Oliver: I'll just give a bit of an explanation. There are two processes. One is the criminal records repository, which is where fingerprint records are established in order to produce a verifiable criminal record of an individual.

CPIC is the infrastructure, the computer system that accesses the criminal record, but it also accesses information that is uploaded daily by the place of jurisdiction. So, if a vehicle is stolen, that's entered at the local level. If someone is charged, that's entered at the local level. A criminal record comes after there has been a disposition in criminal court.

Daily, the CPIC records are updated based on charges. It could be that an individual is under surveillance. It could be a number of things. What Transport Canada is accessing is that daily updating of that type of information, so they get to see anything new that's in there.

Now, there could be a period of delay between the time an individual comes under investigation and the point when a charge is laid or a record is entered in CPIC. That will depend on the flow speed of investigations.

With respect to criminal records, there is a backlog—these are the paper-based criminal records, which have been in the system for a long time. Today we're moving to a live-scan, real-time uploading. For those previous records, there is a process in place to identify and triage those that are most important to get into the criminal records repository so that they can be processed and searched on a more regular basis.

Mr. Sean Fraser: Certainly. Thank you for that clarity.

I can't recall which witness indicated that there are somewhere in the range of 80,000 annual requests for security reports from Transport Canada. Could you perhaps elaborate on whether you

have the capacity to deal with that volume? Quick math would suggest that it's a few hundred a day. This is a phenomenal volume. Do you have the resources you need to do this effectively?

Mr. Brian Rumig: Yes, we do. We've developed mechanisms and procedures that do, in fact, allow us to deal with the volume that we get from our government screening program. I would mention that Transport Canada is but one of the government departments and agencies that we service through this program, so the numbers are actually probably about fourfold of that 80,000.

We use advanced technology. Obviously, we use the expertise we've developed in our business, but really, the game-changer for us has been the advanced technology that allows us to vet information very quickly and efficiently.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mrs. Block, go ahead.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I want to join my colleagues in welcoming you here today. This is an extremely important part of an extremely important study, so I am glad to have been able to hear from such a wide range of witnesses.

I want to follow up on the comments made by Mr. Gooch, and maybe ask him to comment on his concerns with budget 2017.

We know that Transport Canada's budget is significantly lower than it was in 2015-16. On Tuesday, the minister was here, and he presented a very ambitious plan for our transportation industry out to 2030. I asked him whether he felt that he had the resources he needed, not only to fulfill his obligations, but also to implement his strategy. He was actually very firm in answering that he did. When I hear that perhaps there are some issues that arise out of a lack of funding in a given budget, I try to put those two things together. I wonder if it's just human resources or dollars that need to be put behind certain initiatives.

Would you be willing to follow up on that?

• (1200)

Mr. Daniel-Robert Gooch: Yes. My colleagues from CATSA are here, of course, so I'm sure they can elaborate on funding.

Minister Garneau made some important commitments in the Transportation 2030 plan, and we really appreciate that. The commitments to look at service-level standards for screening and being competitive internationally with other countries take us in the right direction.

Unfortunately, the budget did not give CATSA enough funds to reach even the level of service that was being provided last year. We are continuing to work with Minister Garneau and his team on structural reforms to help CATSA as organized and funded, so that's important work, but it needs to come to some finality.

Part of the problem is that every year we're having to come back and present to individuals like you and your colleagues at other committees to get money for CATSA. Travellers are paying this fee, but it's not being directly connected to the service they believe they're paying for. We're spending a lot of our time and money in coming to Ottawa and working with you and your colleagues to get CATSA the funds they need to do their important job every year.

We really need to move to something where resources are growing and declining with changing traffic volumes. We have tremendous growth in this country. We're seeing 5% to 6% growth so far this year alone, with strong growth last year. At the major hubs, it's even stronger. Especially when we look out over the coming decade, we need to do this better.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Thank you.

My next question will be for Ms. Kinney.

How many people work at Transport Canada in the area of security screening?

Ms. Laureen Kinney: Go ahead, Marie-France.

Ms. Marie-France Paquet: It will vary between 70 and 80 people.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Also, I perhaps should know this from other conversations we've had, but can you tell me where the funding for the screening of non-passengers comes from?

Ms. Laureen Kinney: CATSA is funded by appropriations. Those appropriations include the costs of passenger screening as well as non-passenger or worker screening. That is provided through appropriations. Budget 2017 provided funding that would allow for both of those things. That's where the funding comes from for CATSA as a crown corporation. It's from appropriations.

Mrs. Kelly Block: I want to go back to the 70 to 80 persons who oversee security screening at Transport Canada.

Can you tell me if that is enough given that it takes three to five months to perhaps screen somebody? Or is that just due to the rigorous process that an individual is put through? Are there backlogs?

Ms. Laureen Kinney: I think there are certain backlogs. We have been working on those backlogs. Additional funding has been allocated during the past year to help to offset that to some degree within Transport, and we have the same plan in place for this current fiscal year, so additional resources are being provided for that, but there are a number of elements in the system.

One of the things that we do plan to discuss and work on with the community, including our internal and external partners, is how we can rethink and remodernize, and how can we look at other ways to deliver this program, because it is a very heavy program. It takes a lot of process. We have moved to some online applications in some elements, but we think there is more we can do there.

Mrs. Kelly Block: I'm very interested in what triggers a suspicion. I've heard folks say that if a suspicion arises, or if something changes and we suspect that somebody's status has changed.... What triggers a suspicion?

●(1205)

Ms. Laureen Kinney: Maybe I can start. There are many examples. Also, if I may, I'll just add the one point that this is a preventative program. The Minister of Transport has very strong authorities to prevent something happening, so the flexibility in this program is very high. That has been tested in court and it is something that we respect and are very careful about.

If something does arise, it could be as little as a workplace event where someone was upset and made comments that were inappropriate or that raised questions. Those get reported. We follow up on them. It could be an activity that someone in the workplace did that looked like it might be linked to either criminal or extremist sympathies. We've had those cases, and we investigate them. Again, it could be from information that comes from our partners. There are many sources of where that information can come from, but—

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Kinney. If you have any other ideas, maybe you could fill them in with questioning from someone else here.

Mr. Iacono.

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Thank you, Madam Chair.

My question is for Mr. Oliver or for Transport Canada.

Do employees go through checks before they enter secured areas?

Ms. Laureen Kinney: Yes, there is a setup of CATSA screening equipment. It's not exactly the same kind of screening, but it's similar to what the passengers go through.

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Every time a person goes through a particular area, it's always registered that they have gone through that secured area, right?

Ms. Laureen Kinney: There are two things that happen. One is that, at that entry point into the secure area, it is controlled and there is airport access control. They must show their identification. They must show their biometrics to the system—electronically in the larger airports—and they must be screened physically and searched, if you will, but that is on a random basis.

Mr. Angelo Iacono: The number of times they go through any secured area is always registered.

Ms. Laureen Kinney: Yes, it's all recorded.

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Is there any exception to this procedure? Does anybody have an exemption from this procedure, or is it mandatory for all employees who walk through any airport, including yourselves?

Ms. Laureen Kinney: The only exceptions that may occur would be in an actual emergency situation, with uniformed first responders. If the local police of jurisdiction or the firefighters show up and need access, there's provision for them to have rapid access in those circumstances. But if the director of security.... if I go on a tour of a secure area, I go through the same process.

Mr. Angelo Iacono: I'd like to know how often employees who already have a security clearance go through additional checks during the course of their career. For example, I have a security clearance. I'm an employee of five years. What happens with me, or with an employee of two years or 10 years or 15 years? Is there any check?

Ms. Laureen Kinney: We have a revalidation every five years, so if someone has had the transportation security clearance, we do a full revalidation every five years. In addition, there is this daily check of every individual against the police database for any new criminal charges or activities.

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Can you just explain the difference between the five-year validation and the everyday check?

Ms. Laureen Kinney: The everyday check is with the RCMP. It looks at the database that Mr. Oliver just spoke about, which has all this fresh information uploaded daily. If we see that, we take some action and we hold an investigation. In addition to that, on the five-year revalidation, the whole process is gone through again, so we go back to CSIS and we go back to the other agencies.

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Perfect.

I'd like to share my time with Ken.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Thank you, Angelo.

A couple of times it's been mentioned that much of the platform we have in place now arose from the Air India situation. The obvious question goes back to the finding that the information-sharing between the RCMP and CSIS at that time perhaps was not as robust as it needed to be.

Gentlemen, what is your assessment of that situation now?

A/Commr Joe Oliver: Many lessons have been learned over the years, and both organizations have put in place a one-vision strategy that brings the organizations together. There's actually very robust information-sharing, and real-time, ongoing, day-to-day contact and initiatives. The service and the RCMP work very closely, sitting together and co-located in some cases.

Mr. Brian Rumig: If I could add to the assistant commissioner's comments, as you can imagine and as you've heard this morning, the safety of Canadians is of primary interest to all of our organizations. The catastrophic events of Air India were a wake-up, not only for the security intelligence community but for Canadians in general, so we devote an enormous amount of time and effort to making sure that number one priority is addressed efficiently and effectively.

As Assistant Commissioner Oliver has indicated, the RCMP and CSIS have learned from the events of 30 years ago and have implemented much more robust and effective manners of sharing information and working collaboratively.

• (1210)

Mr. Ken Hardie: The situation that gave rise to Mr. Aubin's motion, which was very timely, obviously centred around what happened in Montreal. Does this in fact happen on a fairly regular basis, where information is identified and security clearances are ultimately pulled? Do we have numbers that would indicate how unusual the situation in Montreal might have been, or is it business as usual?

Ms. Laureen Kinney: In my introductory comments I talked about a large number, but in the past year, for example, we've had 48 suspended transportation security clearances as a result of the perpetual vetting checks that are done. We've had 20 cancelled, and we've had 448 that were refused, either due to adverse information that was deemed to be significant, or to a lack of information because we can't check their history. So yes, that happens.

Mr. Ken Hardie: As a result of these security clearances being pulled, was there follow-up? Was there any effort to find out whether or not safety or security had been compromised by the individuals' activity in secure areas?

Ms. Marie-France Paquet: We'll work with the airports, airport security, and local law enforcement and do all the verification we can to get as much information as we can. Then we will take that into consideration through an advisory body and make a determination on whether we should revoke, cancel, reinstate the clearance, depending on the case.

Mr. Ken Hardie: I'm thinking about after the fact. You've pulled it—

The Chair: Mr. Hardie, perhaps you could hold those questions for the next round.

Mr. Berthold.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I just have five minutes and I have a lot of questions. I will go through them quickly.

Mr. Rumig, part of a TVA report generated a lot of public concern. We learned that employees who are suspected of being radicalized are still working at the airport, but not in the secure areas.

Should Canadians be concerned that people who are suspected of being radicalized are still working in sensitive areas, especially since a number of terrorist attacks around the world have targeted unsecured areas at airports?

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Rumig: Obviously the revelations that surfaced from the media reporting were of concern to all of us—Canadians and certainly the security intelligence community. As we indicated this morning, we mobilized very quickly to make sure we understood that potential threat and to take mitigative measures to make sure the threat was contained. On the fact that the individuals may continue to work in the airport authority, I would actually defer to the departments that are responsible for that issue.

Next, should Canadians be concerned? They should be concerned about terrorism, absolutely. Should they be concerned that the RCMP, Transport Canada, CATSA, and the airport authorities are ignorant of that threat? Absolutely not. We view this as our number one priority in terms of safety of Canadians, to the point where, when this information did surface, we mobilized very quickly to contain that. Should the information surface again, that's what we will continue to do.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Thank you, Mr. Rumig.

My second question pertains to the budget. There is some tension between efficiency and security. The airports want things to go faster, while CATSA is concerned about proper security procedures. In addition, we see that there is less money to do all of that.

Mr. Parry, how much more money would CATSA need to protect passenger safety and also allow efficient access to those areas?

•(1215)

[English]

Mr. Neil Parry: As was noted by Ms. Kinney, CATSA receives its funding through a parliamentary appropriation. Under the Financial Administration Act, we live within that parliamentary appropriation. We continue to do so. We have a mandate for efficient and effective screening, which is under our legislation. Budget 2017 has provided us with funding to allow us to continue to implement, manage, and administer the non-passenger screening program 100%. From a security effectiveness point of view, all of our efforts go there.

The other reference to the budget has to do with an area that we are not in fact mandated for, and that is service level, which more affects wait times of passengers. Again, we don't compromise on the security effectiveness piece. However, we live within the appropriations available. The appropriations that were provided to us will allow us to deliver our target service level commensurate with the service level we offered passengers last fiscal year. We expect that roughly 85% of passengers across Canada will wait 15 minutes or less at screening points. That's an annualized average.

Again, it's not a mandated service level target, but that's what we believe we can deliver from an efficiency point of view.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Gooch, what are your thoughts on that?

Mr. Daniel-Robert Gooch: Thank you for your question. I will try to answer in English.

[English]

We don't question CATSA's commitment or ability to be effective in security screening, but on the travellers' side, we have travellers who are waiting over an hour at peak times. They're paying a fairly high air travellers security charge. This impacts the ability to compete and to attract travellers flying over Canada to other destinations.

Yes, it's very much a customer service concern. We do not question the professional approach to securing our skies by CATSA.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: You said that each passenger pays a certain amount for screening. How much money per passenger do airports collect in that way and what remaining amount is not returned to CATSA?

[English]

Mr. Daniel-Robert Gooch: The information that we have is just for the earlier fiscal year. We understand that the difference was about \$110 million, and that varies, but traveller numbers are going up. As a result of that, the air traveller security charge revenue is going up, but the funding is not keeping pace with the growth.

The Chair: Thank you.

You're over your time, Mr. Berthold.

Mr. Aubin.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. Kinney, our discussion this morning about airport security is part of a study that is broader than the committee's study of aviation safety. I think it would be important to have access to a certain number of documents that are not necessarily public documents and that are not tabled in Parliament either.

Would it be possible for you to send us a copy of all the internal bulletins on aviation safety procedures that have been published since 2015, so we can see what changes have been made since 2015?

[English]

Ms. Lauren Kinney: Madam Chair, the question is in regard to a copy of the internal bulletins for airport safety or security since 2015, or both, and at airports.

I don't know that we have a lot of specific airports.... There are instructions per se to airports. There are regulations. We have instructions to our staff. Perhaps you could expand a bit on the question, which data and which airports?

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: I would like to see all the internal bulletins on procedures that Transport Canada has sent to staff that pertain in general or more specifically to aviation safety or security at airports, since these two matters are related.

[English]

Ms. Lauren Kinney: If I may, Madam Chair, can I ask if I can go back and look at what types of documents we have, what security classification they are, and how that mechanism would work? Perhaps we could have that conversation through the clerk to define that.

The Chair: Yes.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Perfect, thank you.

My next question is for the witnesses from Canadian Airports Council. You talked about insufficient funding for security measures, funding that could make for a quicker and more positive passenger experience at airports.

Do all the members of your organization see the idea of privatizing airports favourably or unfavourably, or as completely neutral and having no impact at all?

• (1220)

[English]

Mr. Daniel-Robert Gooch: On airport privatization, our members actually have a variety of views on that. They're communicating directly with government and with the public on where they sit on that. As a council, as a result of that, we haven't taken a position on that particular file.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Let us go back to security issues specifically.

[English]

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mr. Aubin, you'll have to wait until another round.

Ms. Block.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I want to follow up on my last line of questioning.

I thank you, Ms. Kinney, for providing me with that answer in terms of what triggers a suspicion. You mentioned a workplace incident, and you mentioned a couple of other things.

I guess, for lack of a better term, what is the culture within Transport Canada, perhaps even the process by which this concern would be raised, whether it's whistle-blowing or not? What is the process? If somebody observes something or they hear something, how does it get from on the floor at the airport to you and to the RCMP?

Ms. Laureen Kinney: I'm sorry to perhaps not sound as clear as would be ideal, but the problem is that there are many sources of that type of information.

An airport is a fairly non-homogeneous environment, with many employers and many workplaces that are often somewhat isolated. Some are not in the main terminal, and so forth.

Sometimes, in a workplace in one of those areas, there could be a question that would be raised in the group of workers. They could decide to go to the transportation security inspector and raise the question there. That has happened and can be very effective.

They could also go to the airport security people, because, as was mentioned, they have an obligation to report any concerns that they see, or they could go to their own employer who could come to us.

Additionally, there are other environments that have information come up about an employee. For example, let's say they had a Facebook account that said they were an airport employee, and something of concern arose there. That could then be reported by anyone to the RCMP or someone else.

There are many venues. They are all responded to by Transport Canada, very seriously. Any question like that immediately comes back to our transportation security group. As I said, if we have any reservations at all about what we hear, the clearance is suspended while we investigate.

Mrs. Kelly Block: I'm sure we've all seen the signs around the airports that say, "If You See Something, Say Something". It would be the same for employees, and there's an open, non-punitive approach to that sort of reporting.

Ms. Laureen Kinney: That is certainly what is encouraged, and it is part of what was mentioned earlier in terms of safety management systems, where you take the approach of saying it's really important to share that information.

For example, say someone was routinely leaving a door open. I'm speaking for an airport authority. We would look at that, as well as the transport inspector. It's important to know what's going on. Is there something wrong with the way the door is set up? If the person is simply careless, refusing to follow rules, or not willing to make the effort, other action can and would be taken.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Thank you.

I would like to give whatever time I have left to my colleague, Mr. Berthold.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Thank you very much, Ms. Block.

We have talked at length about prevention. Another concern that was raised in the article is the ability to respond at airports. This is in fact why we had wanted members of the Montreal police service to be present. I think it is that service, technically, that is responsible for interventions at airports. The same is probably true in Toronto. The local police forces are mandated to respond.

Mr. Oliver, I don't know if you can answer this question, but I would like to know whether airports have the necessary resources on site to respond if a person has gone through all the steps and has in their possession items that pose a threat to the public.

• (1225)

[English]

A/Commr Joe Oliver: I can only speak to those areas where the RCMP is the police of jurisdiction.

I'm aware that, in some instances, there are arrangements that have been made based on the standard set by Transport Canada that the police have to have a certain response time to certain types of alarms. It's the same with instances of continuous presence, for instance, at pre-clearance for the United States. There are instances where the police of jurisdiction are required.

Maybe the airport authority could speak more to that as well.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Rumig, does CSIS consider airports to be sensitive locations?

I presume so.

[English]

Mr. Brian Rumig: You presume correctly. Yes, indeed.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Chair, instead of introducing a motion, I would like to ask for the unanimous consent of the members of the committee. I propose that we invite members of the Montreal police service and officials from the Montreal-Trudeau airport to address our concerns about security and their ability to respond.

I think that would be helpful. We could devote an hour to that. The possibility of having two meetings to cover this issue was raised. Yet we do not have to hear from other witnesses. We got a lot of answers today.

Nonetheless, if the committee members agree, we could invite representatives of the Montreal police and officials from the Montreal-Trudeau airport to describe the security process. This would also serve to reassure members of the public who use that airport as to the measures taken.

[English]

The Chair: We are scheduled to have one more meeting on aviation safety.

Mr. Berthold has indicated he would like to have the folks from the Montreal airport come. Given the fact that we are a federal government, we would have to deal with more than just Montreal. That would be my concern.

What are the wishes of the committee?

Mr. Fraser.

Mr. Sean Fraser: Do we have witnesses scheduled for the additional meeting already?

The Chair: The Auditor General is scheduled for that meeting.

Mr. Luc Berthold: We have time.

Mr. Sean Fraser: Are you proposing that they're entered into the same existing meeting?

Mr. Luc Berthold: Yes.

The Chair: It would be part of the one two-hour block that we could utilize.

Mr. Sean Fraser: I think that's fine by me.

The Chair: Those are the wishes of the committee? All right.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thank you very much to the committee members.

I just want to cover all aspects of the issue and get some good answers.

Is my time up, Madam Chair?

[English]

The Chair: You have 15 seconds left.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Okay.

Thanks to all the witnesses for their answers.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Iacono.

[Translation]

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I am not sure who I should ask, but I think the appropriate person will be able to answer.

In the reports about the event in Montreal, the spokesperson for the Montreal-Trudeau airport said he did not know the identity of the employees whose access had been revoked.

How can it be that the airport itself does not know the identify of people who cannot access secure areas? Who has that information? Did someone meet with the appropriate spokesperson? Was additional training provided? In light of those comments, what is your procedure?

[English]

Ms. Lauren Kinney: Our normal process, Madam Chair, is to go back to the airport when we've suspended a security clearance. The airport then talks to the regional CATSA person to make sure that the database connection is immediately disconnected so that pass will not show up accurately if they try to go into a secure area. Secondly, they take action to remove the pass, get it back from that employee, and ensure that it's been recovered.

I can't speak to the specifics. It may be something you want to ask at the next meeting. Normally, that would be something that someone in the airport in the security group would know. That may not mean that they would share those names with other people in the airport management.

Mr. Angelo Iacono: In this incident you had four individuals who were highlighted. Two had been, I think, suspended, or their passes had been revoked, and two others are still working, but in different departments. Right?

• (1230)

Ms. Lauren Kinney: Since January 1, we've removed or suspended five clearances at the airport for various reasons. I'm not certain where people may be working in other places at this point in time. My staff may be aware of that.

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Let's say the two of them worked in the same department or in different sectors, whatever you may call it. What happens to that sector or that department? Does it get scrutinized? Does it get a whole change of people going to work there? What happens?

Ms. Lauren Kinney: There's a first step of finding out information, so to be general here, again, there are individual circumstances that are going to vary. But when you hear information, typically it's going to be disturbing and not necessarily demonstrated as being factual. Maybe it's a report that's second-hand, and you're not sure what was said. When you first get that information, you start to check that out, and you get a little bit more information on that.

At the point where you become concerned or have any doubts about the capability of that person, we would suspend the clearance. Whether that would involve, then, some further consideration goes to the earlier question. If there was a further consideration, does this indicate something about that workplace, or are there potentially other security issues? We would be discussing that with our colleagues as we went through the individual person's assessment. Then typically that would go to either the airport themselves or to our law enforcement colleagues, police of jurisdiction.

In those circumstances that would happen, but it's not a routine part. One individual person having an issue does not generally reflect on the entire workplace.

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Would anybody else on the panel like to share some comments?

Mr. Brian Rumig: The other thing I would add to it is that, in the aftermath of the media reporting, our service obviously took note of the potential serious implications of it, and we proactively then rescreened the names and individuals who had previously been identified to us by Transport Canada, all 80,000, if you will. We put that through another vetting process just to make sure we were not missing something, and we're happy to say that it was a positive result.

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Thank you.

I'd like to get the opinion of all the organizations present here today on the measures presently in place to prevent employees with somewhat radicalized intentions from having access to secure areas of the airport. Is it sufficient? According to you, what improvements should be brought forward and why? What actions should we be taking right away?

A/Commr Joe Oliver: If information comes to our attention that raises concerns particularly with the policing community about an individual's potentially becoming radicalized, I'm reassured, with the process we have in place—the ability for us to share that information with Transport Canada, and their ability to initiate in a timely manner a review for cause of that individual's security clearance—that those measures will allow a timely assessment to be made.

Mr. Brian Rumig: Let me add to that. First of all I agree with Assistant Commissioner Oliver that we're very mature in this space and in the sharing of information. Also, the timeliness of that sharing of information has been tested and proven efficient.

Moving forward, one thing we at CSIS are very challenged by is the ability of other departments, the RCMP included, to use our information in an adjudicative process. As you can imagine, the information we deal in is usually of a classified nature. Getting it into a prosecutorial system or an adjudicative system is very troubling in this country. It's something successive governments have tried to deal with and have tried to bring measures for. In fact, the national security consultations of this past year have identified this as an issue as well. The government today is looking to try to come up with a mechanism to address it.

However, going back to the question—

The Chair: Mr. Rumig, could you possibly answer some of that to our next member, so that we can keep on the list?

Mr. Brian Rumig: I'd be happy to.

The Chair: It was important information. I'm reluctant to have to cut you off there.

Mr. Aubin, you have six minutes.

• (1235)

Mr. Robert Aubin: Six minutes, that's great.

[Translation]

I will begin with you, Mr. Oliver.

Can you provide a concise comparison of the staff at Montreal-Trudeau airport and at Pearson airport?

[English]

A/Commr Joe Oliver: I don't have that information. I can't make that comparison.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Okay.

Can you reassure us that you have the necessary resources to keep up with the increase in aviation traffic at either of these airports?

[English]

A/Commr Joe Oliver: You're throwing an open-ended question out here. Obviously, we would always welcome new or additional resources, but the reality is that we have to work in an environment in which sometimes the demand exceeds capacity. We put in place strategies to prioritize our work activity, to identify risk, and to try to risk out as soon as possible those that are low-risk and focus on the high-risk activities.

It's a challenge in policing regardless. It's something we deal with daily, but it's always focused on developing those tools and relationships and accessing information that gives you the ability to make a timely risk assessment and determine whether some particular area deserves some attention and focus.

That's about as well as I can answer your question.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you.

If we wanted to do our own comparison, would it be possible to get figures about the staff?

[English]

A/Commr Joe Oliver: In some instances, depending on the type of operation, we do not normally share the number of resources we have in specific locations. I'll have to go back to assess to see what kind of security classification would have been placed on this information.

To clarify, the role of the RCMP at Montreal and Toronto is focused on the federal policing mandate. The police of jurisdiction have the primary response in responding to criminality—that is mainly the local police and the province—as well as responsibility for the arrangements they have made with the airport authority for responding and the service standards around security at the airport. For the RCMP, though, the role is primarily focused on federal mandates, such as international drug trafficking, conspiracies, and those types of things.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Am I to conclude that the agreement you have in place with the Montreal and Toronto police is of the same type for both airports in terms of the sharing of responsibilities?

[English]

A/Commr Joe Oliver: Yes. I think it goes to the great work of the airport authorities in bringing the multi-agency committee together as well as of assessing security risks and identifying responses to the broader risks within the airport environment. We're always concerned about internal conspiracies at airports, whether by somebody who is involved in international drug trafficking or someone who may attempt to unlawfully interfere with an aircraft.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you.

Back to you, Ms. Sullivan and Mr. Gooch.

In a previous meeting about aviation safety, the fire service at airports was discussed a great deal. Can you confirm that each of your members has its own fire service? If not, do some airports have to call on the local municipal fire service?

[English]

Mr. Daniel-Robert Gooch: That's something that varies from community to community and from airport size to airport size. We could certainly follow up with more precise information for the committee.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Perhaps I am new to this, since I am not involved in the daily administration of airports. Or perhaps it is because I am a fan of movies where fire trucks are on the runway every time a plane is about to crash, to scare the audience. Tell me, though, has the role of firefighters at airports changed very much? There are now various threats inside airports for which services must be available.

Has there been an increase in staff or have you simply increased the mandate with the same staff?

Mr. Daniel-Robert Gooch: I will ask my colleague, Ms. Sullivan, to answer.

[English]

Ms. Jennifer Sullivan: I think we're looking at two different firefighting services. When we talk about aircraft, aircraft rescue, and firefighting that is responding to an aircraft, that's a very specialized skill set and requires specialized equipment. The mandate for that, the quantity of services as well as the timing of services, is regulated by Transport Canada. That is in regulation.

How can airports choose to deliver that service? They can contract that with their firefighting service of jurisdiction. So, if they're in the city of Richmond, where Vancouver airport is, they can contract with...or bring it in-house as we've done at Pearson.

When it comes to the terminal building, that's structural firefighting so it's a different skill set. Again, airports can either choose to deliver that in-house or leave that to their firefighting service of jurisdiction.

We are mandated, of course, during emergency exercises to continually train and exercise with these agencies if they are providing a service, and the same with ambulance and police force of jurisdiction.

● (1240)

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you very much.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Fraser.

Mr. Sean Fraser: I didn't know I was going to have another go-round. I always like the opportunity to get more from the witnesses.

Mr. Gooch, and perhaps Ms. Sullivan, I'll start with you.

There are a couple of themes I wanted to explore along the lines of training innovation. Mr. Gooch, I think you mentioned initially in your remarks that there would be a need for training for security officials. I think, Ms. Sullivan, that you just hinted at it as well with respect to some of the folks dealing with emergencies. I can't help notice the level of automation that is going on in Canadian airports, everything from baggage handling to my scanning my own bag now. To keep up with the times, are there certain areas where we need to be focusing resources to train people to continue to do these jobs at the airport for the next generation?

Specifically it's the ones that have an impact on safety, not just generally at the airport.

Mr. Daniel-Robert Gooch: Are you referring to the skilled workforce? We jumped around there so I'm not....

Mr. Sean Fraser: Absolutely. I'm concerned with disruptive technologies that impact the safety of Canadians at airports. I want to make sure that the people doing the job at the airport have the skills necessary so we're not putting efficiency ahead of safety. Are there certain areas where we should training people who work at airports to keep up with the times and ensure that, despite these new technologies being introduced, we're still offering the safest possible experience?

Mr. Daniel-Robert Gooch: The safety and security is forefront in training at airports throughout the country. I'm not really sure I see the connection with innovation. Innovation and technology are helping us do our jobs better. Taking it back to CATSA, certainly one of the concerns we have with the budget is that CATSA had a plan to introduce technology that would help it do its job better—I'm talking about CATSA Plus—and the funding for that has been stalled. Generally when we look at innovation and technology we see that as being a good thing for improving safety and security. It allows us to do more with less and to be more precise and focus our resources and time on areas with the greatest element of risk.

Mr. Sean Fraser: Perhaps I put it a bit clumsily. There are two things I was trying to explore, separate from one another, and I think I've conflated the two concepts.

With respect to innovation rather than just training, you mentioned CATSA Plus, but are there certain technologies being used elsewhere in the world that we could be adopting with investments in Canada?

Mr. Daniel-Robert Gooch: I think as a community of airports, we're always looking at what's out there and how to improve things. Our organization is part of an international network. We work very closely with colleagues in the United States and around the world, so we're there at the forefront of technologies and innovations that are being developed elsewhere. We're always looking at what we can do to do things better.

The way we're structured, airports have been able to invest \$22 billion in their own infrastructure through the use of user fees since airports were transferred in the early 1990s. Airports are able to take advantage of technologies and innovations. Sometimes our partners in government find it a little more difficult because of a strain on resources, as we've been discussing today, but I think it's certainly a priority for everybody in the industry to make sure that we have access to the latest tools and the most effective tools for everybody to do their jobs.

Mr. Sean Fraser: I'm curious, as well, about automated baggage screening. At the time I first started flying when I was younger, that was just not part of the process. Now it seems routine. What actually goes on behind the scenes with automated screening of baggage now? It kind of disappears through the little covered window and I don't see it again until I pick it up on the carousel. Could you describe the actual process that an airport would go through in terms of screening the bags that we drop off?

•(1245)

Mr. Daniel-Robert Gooch: That's probably most appropriate for my colleagues at CATSA to respond to.

Mr. Sean Fraser: Of course.

Mr. Neil Parry: All checked baggage or all hold baggage from passengers is screened 100%. In the process you're referring to, for the most part, especially at the larger airports, the bag is inducted into the airport's belt system. You see it go down into the basement. That's where it all happens. That bag makes its way to CATSA screening technology. We screen using varieties of the best available technologies. These technologies are regulated by Transport Canada and then tested and trialled by us in a lab and then live trial-tested before they ever make their way into an airport to meet both the regulatory requirements and our operational standards.

We integrate that equipment into the airport's conveyor systems, and those bags are presented. We do different types of screening. Bags that are flagged may be physically searched by screening officers, and other additional screening procedures may be applied to them. Once that bag is cleared, it makes its way back or continues along its way in the airport's conveyor system. They can explain better how that gets onto the aircraft. If the bag is not cleared, then it does not go into that conveyor.

Mr. Sean Fraser: Just to shift gears a little bit, I think—

The Chair: You have twenty seconds—

Mr. Sean Fraser: Oh, that's fine. I think I'll pass on my final 20 seconds. Thanks very much.

The Chair: Mr. Hardie.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Thank you, Madam Chair.

First, I think there's something we need to establish. The question comes up from a variety of sources, but the answer is as follows. The government has no plans to privatize airports. Could you say that *en français, s'il vous plaît*, Monsieur Iacono?

[Translation]

Mr. Angelo Iacono: We do not intend to privatize airports, rest assured, dear colleagues.

[English]

Mr. Ken Hardie: There. So now, with that—

Mr. Luc Berthold: Who said that?

Mr. Ken Hardie: I did, just now.

The issue of safety management systems has come up quite often in our studies of various transport modes. There are some niggling suspicions about the efficacy of those, particularly when it comes to Transport Canada audits versus on-the-ground inspections of what is going on, which is a real issue in the railways, for instance.

What about your safety management system or your security management system in Toronto? Are you subject to audits and on-the-ground inspections and, if so, in approximately what balance?

Ms. Jennifer Sullivan: Yes, we are subject to both. We have quite a number of Transport Canada inspectors on the security side who are on site 24-7 doing inspections, so these are ad hoc and random. There are also preplanned annual inspections, and I can leave it to Ms. Kinney to describe those better. We also have regular annualized audits, in addition to those random inspections.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Within that, there's a robust whistle-blower protection policy?

Ms. Jennifer Sullivan: There is. We have a non-punitive reporting policy at the Greater Toronto Airports Authority. All airports are required to have one.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Ms. Kinney, this would probably be a question for both of you. We've mentioned radicalization as the most recent example of a flag that was raised, but there must be others. I'm thinking of somebody who's gone through discipline, perhaps somewhat harsh, or issues of workplace harassment. Are there other flags where you would want to go back and recheck somebody's suitability for being in a secure area?

Ms. Laureen Kinney: That is exactly the case. Multiple kinds of situations can come up, whether they start from whatever workplace issues may be going on, whether they're disciplinary with a supervisor or inter-employee debates and issues. We have had cases where arguments and/or events occurred that raised questions in terms of what people might have said during the heat of the moment, for example. That raises a flag in some cases, and has come to us. We've had some cases where someone may have seemed disturbed and not necessarily in a state of being able to apply security with provisions and to be confidently allowed access to the security zone. That's very rare, but it has happened in one or two cases.

Minor situations could arise in the workplace that raise a question. Somebody might have made a reference, or written something. It might have been a joke, or it might not, but questions are raised, so they are reported and they are all looked at. Then we have an advisory committee that brings together expertise—in some cases, it might be the RCMP and others—to give us a sense of how seriously they may see such an incident, or whether it's more like a routine type of operation.

• (1250)

Mr. Ken Hardie: Ms. Sullivan, is there an employee assistance program? Let's say somebody is subject to bouts of depression, or things that could impact on their ability to do their job, not necessarily presenting a security risk, but not necessarily doing as much as they should to keep an eye on things.

Ms. Jennifer Sullivan: The employee assistance program would rest with the individual employer. At Toronto Pearson, over 400 different employers have employees with transportation security clearances. An employee with an issue would go through Air Canada or WestJet or the Greater Toronto Airports Authority.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Would you assess a potential contractor's ability to do their job based on things like the availability of an employee assistance program?

Ms. Jennifer Sullivan: Again, a lot of the employers are not directly contracted with the airport authority. They may be contracted to other agencies, so we don't control those relationships.

Mr. Ken Hardie: I see.

CATSA, you've mentioned that the revenue doesn't equal funding. Has that always been the case?

Mr. Neil Parry: Just for clarification, I didn't mention that.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Ken Hardie: I'm sorry.

Mr. Neil Parry: That was mentioned by committee.

Mr. Ken Hardie: My apologies, Mr. Parry.

Generally speaking then, we'll just throw it open to see who feels safe in answering the question.

Mr. Neil Parry: I can answer the question, I just didn't say that.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Is there usually a surplus between the revenue generated and the funding provided? Is this historic? Has it always been that way?

Mr. Neil Parry: That's a good question. CATSA, as a crown corporation, does not have direct insight into the revenue stream. As we're funded through parliamentary appropriations, we only have insight into the appropriations that are provided to us, so I wouldn't be able to answer any questions about any discrepancies between revenues and expenditures.

Mr. Ken Hardie: We can look in other places for that.

Finally, my last question, with respect—

The Chair: I think your time is just about up. We want to ensure that Mr. Berthold gets an opportunity to have his last six minutes.

Go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I would like to go back to the privatization of airports. Just because the prime minister says that this is not in the offing, I do not automatically believe him. Remember that he promised a small deficit, yet we have a very large deficit right now. So let us be cautious and remain vigilant about this.

Ms. Kinney, with regard to the budget, what does Transport Canada do with the \$110 million that CATSA could use to improve operational efficiency and cut wait times for passengers arriving and who have access to secure areas of airports?

[*English*]

Ms. Laureen Kinney: Madam Chair, there are some different elements in that. The biggest efficiency element is CATSA Plus, which is a methodology that CATSA has developed, learning from across the world on how to move people most efficiently through airports. They have been developing that system for some time. They're starting to roll that out in some airports within their existing resources. That is the key, I think, in efficiency improvement, but CATSA has made continual investments and changes over the last year.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: I would like to talk again about the difference between what passengers pay for security measures and what is returned to CATSA.

According to the figures disclosed by the Canadian Airports Council, there is a difference of about \$110 million.

How does Transport Canada use that money?

[*English*]

Ms. Laureen Kinney: Just to clarify, if I understand your question correctly, the air traveller security fee is collected by the air carriers.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Through the tickets, yes.

Ms. Lauren Kinney: The air carriers remit that to the Department of Finance, so any questions on the air traveller security charge, such as any variances that may exist, would all have to be answered by the Department of Finance. I don't have that information.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Okay.

In his various statements, the minister indicated that he would like passenger processing times to be improved.

In addition, another substantial increase in passenger traffic is expected at airports this summer.

I had the opportunity to talk to officials at the Montreal-Trudeau airport. They said they were somewhat sceptical about their ability to process passengers arriving from abroad this summer in order to prevent the long lines seen last year.

I am referring here not to the Canada Border Services Agency, but to CATSA and processing the volume of departing passengers.

Given the minister's interest in speeding up client service, does Transport Canada believe that CATSA has sufficient resources to do its job effectively?

I understand that CATSA has what it needs to apply security measures, but its mandate does not include efficiency and quicker processing of passengers. I believe it is up to Transport Canada to address those aspects.

What do you think?

•(1255)

[*English*]

Ms. Lauren Kinney: Just at a very high level, in terms of the CATSA perspective, they have identified what is needed to provide a similar service to last year, with 85% of passengers moving through the airport within 15 minutes. That is the estimate they make based on very rigorous assessments that are analyzed.

That is definitely management of an annual process with a huge amount of fluctuation. CATSA does a significant amount of work to look at how they move their people around on a daily, monthly, weekend basis, and then on various surge periods through the year. It's a very complex process. I have confidence that CATSA can deliver what they have committed to, but that is an average. There

will be cases where, as in the case mentioned previously, passengers wait longer.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Thank you very much.

I would like to go back to the Canadian Airports Council.

Of course, if you take a plane in the early morning, there are not a lot of people. When there are no charter flights and it is not vacation season, there are not very many people either and things go smoothly. Those 15 minutes help a lot.

Getting through airport security can take anywhere from five minutes to over an hour. When transferring from one terminal to another, such as in Montreal, passengers have to go through security again, which can sometimes lead to missed flights.

In your opinion, what should CATSA do to speed up the processing of passengers without neglecting security at any time? I am asking these questions because I am very concerned that user pressure to improve efficiency might at some point undermine security measures.

How could the process be improved?

[*English*]

Mr. Daniel-Robert Gooch: I think we've spoken to some of the solutions already. CATSA Plus is being rolled out at the first four airports. There is a plan to roll it out to more of the larger airports and higher-volume checkpoints. That plan is a bit stalled, however, until CATSA gets the money to continue the implementation.

I think another part of the problem, though, is the fact that we're every year having to make a case for why CATSA should have the money it needs to do its job. Not only is it inefficient but it also impacts the organization's ability, and ours as an industry, to work more long term and to plan for the future. A funding model that better tracks resources with the revenue that comes in and with the growth in traffic is fundamental. I don't think we can improve things without doing something there. It's an essential part of the problem.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Thank you to all our witnesses. It was a long two hours, but I think it was a very informative two hours for the committee.

Thank you all very much. Have a good day.

The meeting is adjourned.

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