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—
Chair

The Honourable Don Boudria

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• (1150)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.)): Order, please.

Colleagues, the committee will now resume.

I understand that pursuant to what we said earlier today, we have asked the Sergeant-at-Arms, Major-General Gaston Cloutier, to be with us to give us a bit of a briefing.

Welcome, Sergeant-at-Arms.

We're not expecting this to be formal testimony, because as things go formally, it should be the person who lodged the complaint before the House who makes the first statement, but we do need a backgrounder in order to assist us as we commence our work. I understand that because of scheduling challenges that may occur next week, it is much better to have you this week, Major-General Cloutier.

Before we hear from you, I do have one item that we must dispose of. It's a report from the subcommittee on private members' business. I understand it will be rather a brief item.

Monsieur Johnston, could you please tell us about that?

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Very briefly, the subcommittee on private members' business met yesterday to consider private members' business motion M-194 and agreed that it should be votable.

The Chair: Thank you. We are in receipt of that.

Thank you for making this report to us.

I go back to Major-General Cloutier, who is with us. Before commencing our work officially in this regard, committee members are really looking for a briefing on your part, Major-General, along with your very able security people who are with you, of course, in order to highlight what the structure of the security is. We know that inside is yours, and usually that's no challenge. It works well. Outside, it's the same thing. The usual RCMP people on the Hill recognize us from 30 feet away, or sometimes further, and that is not usually a difficulty.

What happened this time, though, was completely different. It didn't matter what ID members of Parliament had, nothing seemed to be valid. We had a very sad case of an MP who was walking to the Hill with a reporter. The reporter gave her badge and was admitted to

the Hill. The member showed his badge and was refused admission to the Hill. They were walking together.

You have heard all kinds of other stories in that regard, and so on. Perhaps before we get into this too fully, you could explain how the structure normally works. How did it work? Was there an operation centre? Where was it located? Who runs that kind of thing, and so on?

Please proceed, Major-General Cloutier. Thank you very much, to you and your people, for making yourselves available with only a few minutes' notice, in the way you have graciously accepted to do this morning.

Major-General Cloutier.

MGen G. Cloutier (Sergeant-at-Arms, House of Commons): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to first introduce the director of security of the House of Commons, Mr. Neal Parker, and Commander Ray Pelletier, who is the coordinator of special events. Both are from the security service of the House of Commons.

I welcome the opportunity this morning to present to you on how the organization for this visit was constructed, the plan of action that was put in place, and the organization that assured the security of the visit. To this end,

[Translation]

I will ask Mr. Parker to provide you with details regarding the flow chart, the organization and the responsibilities of the people in charge of security that day. As you know, Mr. Parker is a former member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police; consequently, he is somewhat aware of how things work here in Ottawa. So, I will turn it over to Neal.

The Chair: Please proceed.

[English]

Mr. Neal Parker (Director, Security Services, Parliamentary Precinct Services, House of Commons): Thank you very much, Chair.

The basic command structure is the same for this visit as it is for all major events in Ottawa. There is an assistant commissioner in charge of protective operations for the entire Canadian organization, and there is a chief superintendent who is in charge of protective operations for this particular region. In concert with that, they have an inspector who is in charge of major events, and that person—

•(1155)

The Chair: Let me interrupt you, Mr. Parker. Whenever you can in your presentation, if you can provide us with names, it will assist the committee in deciding whether we want to hear from them as witnesses. I'm not saying you already knew the names of some of these people, and we don't expect you to know all their names either, but when you do, would you be so kind as to offer them in your testimony? Thank you.

Mr. Neal Parker: Thank you, Chair. I'll start again.

The assistant commissioner is Dwight McCallum. He's in charge of the whole Ottawa operation, of protection. In charge of the protective operations for the central region is Chief Superintendent Line Carbonneau. The major events inspector in charge of this particular visit, the one we would call the site coordinator, is Inspector Louis Lahaie.

That was the command structure. Aside from protective, there's also a Prime Minister's and VIP protective duty, and that person is Superintendent Pat Teolis. So they would be responsible for putting together the outside plan for security, and also for the coordination of any police forces that they would have invited in for assistance—namely, the Ottawa Police Service, Chief Vince Bevan, and the Ontario Provincial Police. I believe the Toronto Police Service was also involved in rendering assistance, as well as the police forces on the Quebec side, and there is a Sergeant-Major François Desfossés, who is the Parliament Hill detachment commander who would have local knowledge of members of Parliament and the actual operation of the Hill. That was the basic command structure as it was presented to us.

During the day of operation, the RCMP would operate out of an operations control centre at RCMP headquarters on the Vanier Parkway. So all communications would come into there. There was also a joint multi-police task force that would handle information prior to the visit, which would have operated out of the RCMP technical operations facility in Orleans. That was in function. Also, there was a mobile command centre on Parliament Hill, on the west side of Centre Block, that would assist the local Parliament Hill detachment people.

That's the basic structure, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

As I don't see any hands up, I will be the first questioner.

Please continue, Major-General Cloutier.

[*English*]

MGen G. Cloutier: It might also be helpful to have Mr. Pelletier very briefly go through the plan of the visit.

The Chair: Tell us how it was supposed to work.

Mr. Raymond Pelletier (Major Events Coordinator, Parliamentary Precinct Services, House of Commons): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

While planning this event for the specific site visit for Parliament Hill, the plan went as follows. There were briefings and meetings held between the RCMP and all the stakeholders, our service

included—we were present at the meetings—to develop the plan. Of course, there was the protocol side of it as well, but once the protocol plan was in place, all the security agencies got together and developed this plan for the various sites.

In relation to this site, there were road closures associated with it. There was a communiqué that was sent out by the clerk's office with reference to the road closures. I also asked at one point whether a communiqué would be communicated to the members of Parliament. I was informed that the whips would be informed and that it would disseminated from there with reference to road closures.

The Chair: With reference to road closures. Okay.

[*Translation*]

MGen G. Cloutier: Mr. Chairman, I would like to come back to what Mr. Guimond said yesterday in the House. I was there myself. As you stated, we have experienced this sort of incident in the past, and I wouldn't be surprised if, at the end of your proceedings, you were to conclude, once again, that people don't know what parliamentary privilege is or how to apply it.

As for the point raised by Mr. Guimond, my experience over the last 27 years is such that I would say without hesitation that this should be pursued. I became personally involved when I received a phone call telling me that the bus could not go up from the Justice and Confederation Buildings. I was the Director of Security, and I happened to be not very far away. What happened exactly? Well, it's quite simple: a bus containing a riot squad from the Ottawa Police Service and Ontario Provincial Police arrived on the scene; they stopped their bus directly in front of the service entrance, which meant that no one could get through. We told them to move as quickly as possible, which they did; after that, service resumed.

As you know, the point raised by Mr. Guimond about the RCMP—namely the fact that members of Parliament are addressed only in English—has been raised a number of time here in this Committee. We have also had discussions in Committee with RCMP authorities.

As regards the specific case of the member from Drummond, Ms. Picard, we need additional details. I believe this happened inside Center Block, did it not? I asked my people to go and see you, as well as the member for Rivière-du-Nord. I don't know what floor the events occurred on. Was it on the sixth? I asked Mr. Pelletier to check out what had happened in these two incidents and, as I was explaining, with the case involving the green buses. You may well conclude, once again, that coordination was inadequate. Personally, I am starting to realize that there was a lack of communication throughout the process.

I don't want to make a long speech here, but I will just say that I myself found myself, at 3:45 p.m., attempting to escort Ms. Kim Campbell to the unveiling of her portrait in the Centre Block. House of Commons protocol officers were with her at the Chateau Laurier, but she couldn't move. It took us about 40 minutes to bring her here. So, because I experienced the same difficulties as you did that day, I think the best thing is to go directly to questions.

•(1200)

The Chair: If you don't mind, we will begin with Mr. Guimond, since he is the one that tabled the complaint in the House—a complaint with which, it should be said, we are all in agreement. However, it's also important to recognize that Ms. Campbell's situation is probably different, since she is no longer a member of Parliament. Contempt of Parliament, if that is in fact what we're talking about, does not apply in her case. There may have been other breaches of protocol, but that is not the same thing as far as our committee is concerned.

Mr. Guimond.

Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ): I would like to make one brief comment, Mr. Chairman. You know what a humble person I am. I don't want to sound pretentious, but the fact remains that I am the one who raised the question of privilege. It concerns all of us, but I do not get the feeling I am speaking for 308 members of Parliament. I am the one that raised this matter. You probably all regret that you didn't think of it before me, but in any case, that is not the matter at hand, Mr. Chairman.

I want it to be clear to all colleagues that we should consider the testimony of Mr. Cloutier and the members of his team as nothing more than an informal briefing session. This is a public meeting and we reserve the right to hear from Mr. Cloutier again, based on other information we may have received. If Mr. Cloutier is providing testimony this morning before the person who raised the point of privilege, it is simply because an accommodation was needed, in that he was unavailable at another time. I wanted to repeat that, Mr. Chairman, because this point was made in camera.

•(1205)

The Chair: I stated that at the beginning of the meeting, Mr. Guimond. I indicated that this is not official testimony, and that we are holding a briefing session today in order to accommodate MGen Cloutier, who happens to be available this morning, and to guide us in our future discussions. I also pointed out that we would be meeting again once the investigation is completed.

Mr. Michel Guimond: You also said that I would be appearing next Tuesday.

The Chair: Yes, I did.

Mr. Michel Guimond: Mr. Cloutier, for how long have you been working on Parliament Hill?

MGen G. Cloutier: For 27 years.

Mr. Michel Guimond: You have held the same position for 27 years?

MGen G. Cloutier: Yes.

Mr. Michel Guimond: So, you were around for Ronald Reagan's visit?

MGen G. Cloutier: Yes, of course.

Mr. Michel Guimond: And for Margaret Thatcher's visit?

MGen G. Cloutier: Yes.

Mr. Michel Guimond: And for Bill Clinton in 1995?

MGen G. Cloutier: Yes, indeed.

Mr. Michel Guimond: I was also around. There was also Nelson Mandela, and others still. Twenty-seven years ago, though, I was still a teenager and I was more interested in girls than in politics.

Mr. Neal Parker: *[Editor's Note: Inaudible]*

Mr. Michel Guimond: Major-General Cloutier, you are in a position to compare what we experienced this week with has happened in the past, as you have been around for the visits of many other dignitaries and VIPs. Did this visit unfold as others had in the past? Was it, as they say, business as usual? Was it no worse or no better than the visits of Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher or Bill Clinton, for instance? In the case of Nelson Mandela, it was a farewell visit.

MGen G. Cloutier: Comparisons are possible to a point. The security level may have been much higher than usual, but staff were less well prepared, given the short timeframe for organizing the visit. Mr. Parker can probably provide details in that regard.

The planning of this type of visit normally takes three or four months. This time, the time available fell far short of that. I am sure that RCMP employees responsible for organizing the visit will tell you that they had to run a lot and run very fast. That's the real difference. If you have time to plan a visit properly and can ensure that all the forces you need are well prepared and ready to go, then there is no problem. I can imagine, considering they only had two weeks, that they were unable to attend to every detail.

Mr. Michel Guimond: I would like to address a question to Mr. Parker now, whom I was listening to directly in English when he began his presentation. You said—and this is my translation—that the structure in place was the same for every other major visit. Do you stand behind that statement?

The Sergeant-at-Arms qualified that somewhat, saying that you had had less time to plan the visit than for previous major events. Perhaps we could draw a comparison with the visit of Vicente Fox, which took place last month. You're saying that the structure was exactly the same as for other major events. Is that correct, Mr. Parker?

Mr. Neal Parker: Mr. Chairman, at that point I was referring to the RCMP structure. The basic structure was the same as in the past.

•(1210)

Mr. Michel Guimond: I have one last question.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Michel Guimond: What role did the FBI play in organizing this visit?

Mr. Neal Parker: The FBI may have been involved on the intelligence side, but in terms of protective operations, we dealt with the U.S. Secret Service and the U.S. State Department.

The Chair: We will come back to you later, Mr. Guimond.

Mr. Reynolds.

[English]

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC): Mr. Chair, I don't understand how this has been going on for so long, as we've just said. We all wear a pin. Even if someone's been around for 30 years, we still wear it out of respect for those who work here, so they don't have to be embarrassed sometimes asking who you are, or what you are.

Would it not be a simple process to have everybody who is on this Hill, especially in these times when there's tight security, have a little book with all our names and pictures in it, so that they could have a fast reference? For example, you get Bill Blaikie walking up the Hill, and he gets stopped—he's been around for a long time—and Jason Kenney darn near missed the bus because a policeman was saying, you can't get on the Hill. He showed him his pin and showed him his House of Commons green card saying he was an MP. That was still not good enough.

We certainly should be able to come up with a program that advises that there are 308 people here—I don't care what you do with the senators, myself—who have a right to be on this Hill anywhere they want to be, any time of day or night, and that makes sure these people know that.

What concerns me still about the security stuff is when you go through the car wash in a cab—this happened to me last Saturday, and I had guests with me and I wanted to give them a tour of the Hill, but I didn't have my pin on and I didn't have my green card. She said, "Well, I have to go in and check to see if you're on the list." I said fine, so I sat in the cab for a few minutes. She wasn't coming back, so I got out. She came out and said, "You're not on any list." I could have gotten out of the cab and walked up to the Hill—the guys at the front door know who I am—and gotten inside the place. But finally someone came running out and said, "Oh, that's Mr. Reynolds. He's okay."

It's obvious the system is not that great. There's something wrong that people don't have a fast reference ability to look up something. If I knew I was in a book on page 27, I could at least say—and maybe that's like a code number—"Listen, go to page 27. I'm on that page." You wouldn't know that unless you knew you were there, so there may be some kind of code we could all have to give your people so that we get instant recognition.

If this happens at a time when we have a president here, which is very nice, what would happen if we really had a terrorist problem all of a sudden, and bang, you have a bunch of people on the Hill who don't know who MPs are or what their right is to get into their offices?

I would hope you would come back to us when we have our next meeting with a system that says we've found something that should be as foolproof as it can be, to make sure people have access and security.

The Chair: General Cloutier.

MGen G. Cloutier: That comes back to our last meeting at the committee here, when a similar observation was raised. The RCMP does have a book down below at the car wash with all your pictures, including phone numbers.

Mr. John Reynolds: I checked that Saturday and he told me I wasn't on any list.

MGen G. Cloutier: I have a book and they have a book, and what we normally do in security, once everyone has been accommodated in their new offices, is publish a pocket-sized book with all your pictures and phone numbers and office numbers, and they carry this, and we brief them.

In this case it comes back to the point that the RCMP constables at the car wash keep changing: they are brought in from all over Canada, they're here for x number of days or months, and they leave. With this rotation, all of a sudden you can go through there some days and they'll just wave you through. They won't even get out of the trailer. What they ought to do is....

We're going to address that. We're going to have to go back and re-brief the RCMP on their requirement.

That brings up another question you might want to consider—you've heard the Speaker on this one—and it is this. We are responsible for security from within the buildings of Parliament—or the Speaker is, and through him we are. Maybe the time will come that all these multi-jurisdictions we deal with will have to be reviewed. Perhaps the authority of Parliament might have to be extended, or should be extended, to the barrier, or throughout the precincts of Parliament.

● (1215)

The Chair: Very quickly, Mr. Reynolds, and then we'll move on to the others.

Is the book I'm holding the one you're referring to, by the way?

A voice: Yes.

The Chair: Do we have the new one yet?

A voice: No.

Mr. John Reynolds: To follow up—I'll use this as an example—last night when I was leaving—

MGen G. Cloutier: I'm sorry, we have the same book but in another size at the moment, and that's what the RCMP has. It's exactly the same type of book, but not the same size.

Mr. John Reynolds: Last night when I was leaving, as I usually do I pressed D on my phone and it went to security. I said I had a cab coming and that it was from whatever the name of the cab company is. I've never had a problem. Last night I did the same thing. I got a fellow on the other end who said: "You can't phone me. You have to phone somebody at the House, and they phone me." I said, "Well, I already have you on the line and I'm nowhere near security in the House of Commons." He said, "Okay, I'll let you do it this time, but no other time."

It's programmed into my thinking that I know I can press that button and get that gate there at any time, and now all of a sudden somebody down there has the message that he has to be phoned by a security guy in the House of Commons. Why?

MGen G. Cloutier: We'll look into that.

Mr. John Reynolds: That was at 6:30 last night.

MGen Gus Cloutier: Thank you.

The Chair: Next on the list is Mr. Casey.

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC): Thank you very much.

I have a little question about security within the House. On Wednesday, three of us, members of Parliament, came out of the House of Commons. We wanted to walk down the hall to the rotunda just to witness the signing of the book. We asked if we could go down and were told yes. We took five steps and then were stopped by another House of Commons security guy and were told no, we couldn't go; absolutely, we weren't allowed to walk down the hall. We could see all kinds of other people down there.

So we turned around, walked back through the House of Commons and came up the back hall to the hall of honour. There was no problem. We just walked by everybody. We walked right up and stood right beside...so we could watch the ceremony.

Who was right? Should we have been able to walk down the hall or not?

MGen G. Cloutier: Go ahead.

Mr. Raymond Pelletier: If I may answer that, Mr. Chair, yes, you are absolutely right that you should have had unimpeded access to the south corridor. There was a secure zone that had been identified to our security operations personnel at our briefing prior to the visit, and the south corridor was part of it. They were informed that they were to politely ask you if you could be redirected, but if you insisted on going down that corridor you were permitted to do so.

Mr. Bill Casey: Actually, I came the other way and was told I couldn't come up that way. So I went down to the basement, came back up through the House of Commons, and then tried this other hallway and was told yes. Then I was told no. Then I went around back and nobody said a thing. It was really inconsistent. There was a lack of communication there. We got there and did everything we wanted to do, but it took three hallways to get there.

MGen G. Cloutier: What I discovered, Mr. Chairman—and I know exactly what you're talking about—is that there were also U.S. security forces in those two corridors with our House of Commons people. They were all together.

Mr. Bill Casey: This was just House of Commons people.

MGen G. Cloutier: Just House of Commons? Mr. Pelletier is absolutely right.

Mr. Bill Casey: That's good to know. Thanks.

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

Mr. Broadbent.

Hon. Ed Broadbent (Ottawa Centre, NDP): There is one issue that concerns me, Mr. Cloutier—you already dealt with it—which is that maybe we should extend the limits where the House of Commons responsibility should rest in such visits, beyond where they are now.

I wonder if you would elaborate on that. How far out do you think it should go?

MGen G. Cloutier: Mr. Chairman, basically what we should consider is to have one unified security force. I've said that repeatedly, because once you have multi-directions you immediately affect the command and control of an organization. Who is the boss? Who is in charge? Who should say what?

Physically, I think we should be masters of our own House, and not only in security but in some other aspects as well.

We've debated this over the years. I've always been a strong supporter of one security force on the Hill and I still am. It does work—it could work—and it would make command and control much easier.

Hon. Ed Broadbent: I think that's very interesting, and it would seem to me, as a member of Parliament, a kind of feasible, practical solution. What's the counter-argument?

• (1220)

MGen G. Cloutier: Well, you have two houses, the Senate and the House, and from a constitutional point of view each of them wants to have its own force—although I must admit that the House has made overtures to the Senate. We've made progress that way as well. We have some of our senior security staff on exchange with the Senate at the deputy director level.

It's working, but it's been a long, slow evolution.

Hon. Ed Broadbent: Mr. Chairman, this seems to me to be an obvious line of constructive reform.

This is news to me, that the Senate has its own security staff separate from the House of Commons. This is an issue that maybe we could...unless I hear a counter-argument from a security point of view—and I can't imagine what that would be; it's a jurisdictional issue—we should not lose any time in trying to resolve this and get a common security force for both the Senate and the House of Commons, to say the least. This security force would have overall responsibility for the security of the area.

The Chair: Mr. Broadbent, with respect, we've already recommended precisely that.

The breaches of security largely have nothing to do with inside the building. In many cases, we're talking about events that occurred on Wellington Street.

Anyway, please continue.

Hon. Ed Broadbent: I understand that we got into that because we were talking about whether, particularly on such visits, security should be extended to Wellington Street. Presumably, if I understood the reply, we now have a Senate security force in the House of Commons, but we aren't going to have a dividing line down Wellington Street where the Senate security would have responsibility for half and the House of Commons for the other half. How absurd can you get, if that's the implication?

If we're talking about extending the limits of security, that's another argument for a common security force here.

MGen G. Cloutier: When I was stating that fact, it's not really the responsibility of the Senate or the House; the RCMP is responsible for outside.

Should we have the RCMP as one force—I'm just thinking out loud here—responsible for everything, or should we have the parliamentary force, so to speak, responsible for the precinct of Parliament?

Hon. Ed Broadbent: Mr. Chairman, this obviously would require a much more thorough discussion than we can give it here, but following this incident, I for one think this is an issue that should be looked into again with care.

Could I ask a question unrelated to this issue, though it is a security question?

Was the FBI allowed to carry weapons during this visit?

Mr. Neal Parker: Sir, the United States Secret Service were allowed to carry weapons, yes.

The Chair: Inside the building?

Mr. Neal Parker: Yes, they were.

Hon. Ed Broadbent: Was this the first time they were allowed to do this?

Mr. Neal Parker: No. It's been a practice for several years that they are granted permits to carry weapons when they cross the border, but they have to go through a process for getting permits to do that.

Hon. Ed Broadbent: Could you tell me what year that began?

Mr. Neal Parker: I would only be speculating, sir. It was several years ago.

Hon. Ed Broadbent: Was it during the time of President Reagan, or even preceding that?

Mr. Neal Parker: No, it was not President Reagan. I would just be speculating.

The Chair: Okay, we'll continue with the questioning.

Next, I have Madam Redman.

Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Thank you all for coming on such short notice.

Monsieur Guimond did a really good job, Mr. Cloutier, of talking about your vast experience.

My question is probably in that context. I'm just wondering if the kind of security, the implementation and integration of other security forces when a visiting head of state comes in the atmosphere in a

post-September 11 world, is changing in your view? Is there more of this? Is this generally a routine head of state visit that you had?

Again, this is a little bit broader, but it is a parliamentary privilege point, so I would ask if we need to examine all of that to refine it so that things happen more smoothly, notwithstanding the short timeline we had this time.

MGen G. Cloutier: Absolutely, Mr. Chairman. I agree with that. I think it should be fully reviewed, and perhaps your committee is the right place to do it.

People seem to be very nervous these days, and for good reason, obviously.

I would say that although the planning for this visit followed along the same lines as the planning for previous visits, it was apparent that the level of security was higher. It was higher in the number of people, because they probably had a pretty good intelligence report on the number of demonstrators anticipated to show up, and they made provisions for that.

But I'm not the planner on that type of thing. Maybe the director can....

• (1225)

Mr. Neal Parker: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Yes, we were informed by the RCMP that this visit was given the highest level of security ever for any visit. That was the backdrop for that.

Hon. Karen Redman: Again, it may be a side bar, much like Mr. Broadbent's—this isn't parliamentary privilege—but I would be really interested in knowing what kind of recourse citizens had who were inconvenienced by not being able to get to their residences. Again, maybe this isn't something for this group.

The Chair: That's outside of this committee.

As we start our work next week, the main reason we got you here today was to get this briefing on how the structure works.

You've identified Mr. Louis Lahaie. Was he in charge of making all this happen?

MGen G. Cloutier: Yes.

The Chair: For that day he was in charge of our usual guy, Sergeant Desfossés.

MGen G. Cloutier: Yes, absolutely.

The Chair: Monsieur Lahaie would have known to not let anybody on the Hill except MPs.

MGen G. Cloutier: I assume so.

The Chair: Presumably he should have told everybody, "Don't let everybody breach security and come onto the Hill, except MPs".

MGen G. Cloutier: Yes.

The Chair: So we want to know from him if this was done, or if people didn't listen. The Hill is secure for the MPs, and if the MPs can't come, how can they be secured if they're not here to begin with?

MGen G. Cloutier: Yes, and did he transmit that information to the police forces they brought in from Toronto and other places in Canada?

The Chair: So on the person at the centre of providing all these instructions—I'm not talking about whether he's guilty or innocent—are you saying this would have been Monsieur Lahaie. What is his rank?

MGen G. Cloutier: It's Inspector Lahaie.

The Chair: He would have been in charge, as it were.

MGen G. Cloutier: Yes. He was what we call the operational commander, the site commander,

The Chair: Okay. I think the committee will probably be interested in that witness.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Johnston.

[*English*]

Mr. Dale Johnston: Thank you.

I simply want to ask if it was necessary to have the whole area cordoned off. I came up here expecting that there would be the usual little break in the centre of the steps so members could pass through. When I got there, I discovered I had to walk all the way around the West Block. That resulted in my not being in the House in time for the vote that day.

Maybe you could just explain the necessity of having a barrier completely around there.

MGen G. Cloutier: A double barrier type of thing.

Do you want to do that, Neal?

Mr. Neal Parker: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The purpose of that was in response to the demonstrations. The RCMP wanted to control the movement and flow of demonstrators, so they set up a perimeter—basically what it would be like at a Canada Day event. It was to control the demonstrators as best they could.

Mr. Dale Johnston: So if you were to leave a gap in there to allow a person to walk through, that would jeopardize the integrity of the whole perimeter.

Mr. Neal Parker: Yes, they've had problems in the past. Where they left small gaps, demonstrators found them very quickly, and it created a problem.

• (1230)

Mr. Dale Johnston: Thank you. That's all for now.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mr. Guimond.

Mr. Michel Guimond: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I wouldn't like my comments to in any way suggest that I question the professionalism of the security officers who work at the House of

Commons or that I don't trust them. I just don't want there to be any ambiguity in this regard. In fact, if the alert level was high, as we certainly noted among security officers, the stress level was also high.

Mr. Pelletier, you said earlier that there had been briefing sessions. Did American Secret Service officers take part in those briefings?

Mr. Raymond Pelletier: Yes, in certain briefings with the RCMP.

Mr. Michel Guimond: And did those briefings take place in the presence of House of Commons Security staff, or without you.? Are you answering for the RCMP?

Mr. Raymond Pelletier: The briefings took place in RCMP facilities. I was present for those briefings. All the police forces involved, including Secret Service officers, were in attendance.

Mr. Michel Guimond: At every one of the meetings?

Mr. Raymond Pelletier: Yes, every one.

Mr. Michel Guimond: I'm not sure whether you, Mr. Pelletier, Mr. Parker or the Sergeant-at-Arms should answer this question. Were our security staff the only people who were supposed to have direct contact with members of Parliament, especially here in the Centre Block? Is it possible that RCMP personnel from Regina, or officers with the Secret Service, the Ontario Provincial Police or the Ottawa Police Service could have, working alone, had contact with MPs here in the Centre Block?

Mr. Raymond Pelletier: I don't understand what you mean by your question.

Mr. Michel Guimond: Well, supposing an RCMP officer from Regina has been posted here, in the Centre Block, and he sees me walking down the hall. There is a good chance he won't know who I am. In other words, was there always someone working with those officers, here in the Centre Block, who would recognize members of Parliament? Were they given the house keys?

Mr. Raymond Pelletier: No.

Mr. Michel Guimond: So, there was always someone. Ms. Picard will probably be appearing before the Committee to provide her testimony. Based on what you've said, it is impossible that a male Secret Service, RCMP, Ontario Provincial Police or Ottawa Police Service officer entered the ladies washroom between 10 and 10:30. It could not have been an officer from one of those police forces. Am I discovering here that one of our own security officers would have done that?

Mr. Raymond Pelletier: That's the reason why I intend to investigate and meet with the member in question.

Mr. Michel Guimond: Mr. Chairman, I have two other questions. To Mr. Parker or Mr. Pelletier, when President Fox visited Canada, was the Mexican Secret Service involved? Did you organize briefings with the RCMP at RCMP Headquarters which Mexican Secret Service officers attended?

Mr. Raymond Pelletier: No, not at that level.

Mr. Michel Guimond: So, you could say that President Bush's visit was treated differently. To your knowledge, Mr. Cloutier, when Mr. Clinton visited in 1995, did American Secret Service officers attend our briefings?

•(1235)

MGen G. Cloutier: Yes.

Mr. Michel Guimond: I have one last question, which is addressed to Mr. Cloutier.

As I understand your role as Sergeant-at-Arms, you are responsible for managing a variety of departments, including security, but you also advise and provide support to the Speaker and, to a certain extent, to members of Parliament. You express opinions that the Speaker is free to accept or reject.

MGen G. Cloutier: Yes.

Mr. Michel Guimond: You have 27 years of experience, Mr. Cloutier. Is it your view that parliamentary privilege was breached during the events of this week?

MGen G. Cloutier: You want my opinion?

Mr. Michel Guimond: Yes. You know a great deal about Parliament, parliamentarism, and members of Parliament. You understand our role, and you know what we can and cannot do. I am simply seeking your opinion.

MGen G. Cloutier: Mr. Casey said earlier that he had been prevented from circulating in the building, which is contrary to parliamentary privilege, as we said this morning. If, as members of Parliament, you are not able to have direct access to Parliament Hill from wherever you happen to be—like the Westin Hotel, as Mr. Blaikie was mentioning—then that is a breach of parliamentary privilege. You have the right to go wherever you like. I am no procedural expert, but I am sure that if someone stops you, you can put that question to him. I wouldn't be surprised if his answer were yes...

Mr. Michel Guimond: That's your opinion. In any case, we will be hearing from the experts.

The Chair: Your time was up a long time ago, Mr. Guimond.

Ms. Boivin, please.

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, it was mentioned that a number of different police forces and groups were involved in providing security. For the record, I would like to commend the Gatineau Police Force, which also played a role on that quite special day, although probably less so on this side of the river.

I have some very brief questions. Who had the last word on matters of security? Canada or the U.S.?

[*English*]

MGen G. Cloutier: Canada.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Françoise Boivin: With respect to what you called

[*English*]

the highest level of security,

[*Translation*]

it was

[*English*]

on whose order?

[*Translation*]

You say this is the highest level of security you've ever seen in all the time you've been here.

[*English*]

On whose order?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Neal Parker: Mr. Chairman, it was the RCMP that informed us of that.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: So, the RCMP told you that there would be a higher level of security this time that had ever been the case for any other official visit?

Mr. Neal Parker: Yes, we were advised of that.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: You don't know whether the order came from somewhere else. That is all you know at this point.

Mr. Neal Parker: Yes.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: We understand one other.

Did they explain why this was a requirement, or did they simply give you orders? As a new member of Parliament, I'm not very familiar with procedure. Did you simply receive orders that you had to follow or, as guardians of parliamentary privilege, could you also ask questions? Based on what you saw, was all of this because they were expecting a large number of demonstrators? Did they have serious fears of a terrorist attack of some sort? What was the reason for this high level of security, the highest ever seen in the entire history of Canada?

Mr. Neal Parker: Mr. Chairman, security in general was affected by the events of September 11, 2001. Following those events, the general level of security changed across the globe.

The integrated intelligence unit was looking closely at possible threats, and so on. The decision was made, with the assistance of the U.S. Secret Service, that this level of security would be provided. It was based on all sorts of factors.

•(1240)

Ms. Françoise Boivin: It was because it involved the United States. In terms of post 9/11, that is certainly connected to the United States. The level of security was not the same for the official visit of President Fox of Mexico.

Mr. Neal Parker: No, not exactly. But you must also consider where the event was taking place. The event was taking place in Ottawa, Canada. In such cases, threats against Canada must also be considered.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: I don't follow you. As far as I know, Mr. Fox visited Ottawa, in Canada, several weeks ago. What distinction are you making here? I see only one: it depends on the country of origin of the person making the visit.

Mr. Neal Parker: The level of security for the President of the United States is higher, obviously. We're talking about the security level provided by police forces, and so on. There is a difference. It is a subtle one, but it was a security level 5.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: I'm not trying to trick you, I just want to understand. You say that this is the result of the events of September 11, 2001, but it is more related to the fact that it was President Bush, and there were a number of criteria to be met.

You talked about briefings. Do you also give briefings to the media and demonstrators? Are there meetings with the media to discuss security in anticipation of such events, so that the tone of these discussions is more reasonable, and there is less hysteria?

Mr. Neal Parker: The RCMP communicates as quickly as possible with media organizations. There is an RCMP Unit that liaises with the media, demonstrator groups, etc.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Before the event.

Mr. Neal Parker: Absolutely.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: I have one last question. Did you do a post-mortem? Will you be meeting with the groups that were involved for a debriefing?

Mr. Neal Parker: We are supposed to do that today.

The Chair: I would like to ask a few questions myself.

When those briefings took place, Mr. Pelletier, are you aware whether the point was made that police officers coming to work here in front of Parliament have to be bilingual? I don't know whether that falls within your area of responsibility. We will be asking these questions of Mr. Lahaie next week. Are you aware whether that issue was ever raised?

MGen G. Cloutier: It was raised here in Committee about two years ago, at a meeting with representatives of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. I believe it was with the Commander of Division "A", the person in charge in Ottawa, who is Line Carboneau.

The Chair: We will have to ask Mr. Lahaie.

MGen G. Cloutier: Excuse me. In that case, it would be on the operations side. I believe Mr. Guimond wants the problem of unilingual offices to be addressed one again. That would fall within the responsibility of the Commander of Division "A", Line Carboneau, would it not?

The Chair: The fact remains that there had to be one person in charge that day who asked officers from the Toronto and Ottawa Police forces to come to Ottawa. That person picked up the phone and requested that officers be sent and, wherever possible, that those officers be bilingual. Who was in charge of making such a request? Would it have been Mr. Lahaie?

MGen G. Cloutier: I would say that he was the one responsible.

The Chair: Fine. We will ask him.

[English]

If there was not a customary gate to let people in, which Mr. Johnston or Mr. Reynolds referred to, but there was a breach in that gate where people could come in, why were MPs not told? This is contrary to the usual process, where there's a breach in the barricade, you're going to have to go around by the West Block...because we received no notification. Why would MPs not have been told this, and whose job would it have been to tell them: the RCMP's, the Speaker's, or even yours?

It's quite evident they weren't told. At least, I never received any communication telling me this.

Mr. Neal Parker: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I had occasion this week to brief the Board of Internal Economy that there would be barricades on Parliament Hill.

The Chair: So it should have been the board's job to inform us.

Thank you.

Again, this is a question that's maybe better suited for Mr. Lahaie, but I still must ask. Somebody took the decision that a press accreditation was admission to the Hill but an MP's accreditation was not. Do you have any idea who would have made a decision like that? It happened to a number of MPs. On that day MPs tried to come to the Hill, showed their MP cards, and were told that wasn't good enough. A reporter with them showed them a reporter card and they said that was fine. Who would have made a decision like that?

• (1245)

MGen G. Cloutier: I really have no idea. I know that at one stage, as far as the press was concerned, they wanted to issue a pass other than the present accreditation for the members of the press gallery, and we said there was no requirement for this. They were already accredited and therefore their accreditation was good.

The Chair: But similarly, wouldn't MPs be accredited?

MGen G. Cloutier: Oh, absolutely. They were told that the pin and all this were sufficient.

The Chair: So security knew that MPs had cards or pins—knew or should have known.

MGen G. Cloutier: Oh, yes.

The Chair: Thank you.

Monsieur Casey.

Mr. Bill Casey: I don't have any spellbinding questions, but I wanted to give you an indication of how security has changed. When George Bush's father was here in 1991, I ran into him in the hallway right outside this door. He was with the Prime Minister; they were walking down the hall, and the only protection they had was a cameraman. That's how things have changed, if you can imagine that. I asked what they were doing and they said they were avoiding the crowds—which is what I was doing too—by taking the back hall. That's just to show you.

The other comment I wanted to make was that although I was restricted by two officers on Wednesday, in my 12 years, 4 months, and 42 days here they have been a big plus and a big asset to us, and they always really make us feel part of the operation. They make us feel like part of the team, and I've always thought it was one of the best parts of the place. Even though they did restrict us on Wednesday, I wanted to get that on the record.

MGen G. Cloutier: I want to follow up your story about Mr. Bush Senior. I took them to question period, Mr. Bush and his wife, unescorted by public service or anything. I just walked, as you say, down the back corridor, took them to question period, took them out, and put them in the car. That was it.

Times have changed on the international scene so much that I'm sure that the threat assessment that was provided to the RCMP through various intelligence have brought that level super high, compared to what we used to have.

Mr. Bill Casey: I think we have to remember too that the United States has had in the last few years two presidents who have been shot. I actually ran into him as I came around the hall. I physically ran into him, and that's how close you could get to him.

Hon. Karen Redman: That's why they changed the process.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr. Parker, and Mr. Pelletier for attending so quickly. I think this really, if I can say so personally, assisted us in knowing where at least to start with this process, because it is highly unusual in terms of what we normally do around here.

[*Translation*]

Tuesday we will be hearing first from Mr. Guimond, because it is the complaint he tabled before the House that has been referred to this Committee. If the Committee agrees, I will ask our Clerk and Researcher to locate Inspector Louis Lahaie, so that we can have him appear, possibly on Tuesday as well. I am seeking your advice in this regard. I think we should ask him to come with Sergeant Desfossés, because normally, the people working for Sergeant Desfossés perform their work almost as well as our security officers here at the House of Commons. As a general rule, they are pretty functional. Clearly things were not working as they should have on the day of the visit in question.

Mr. Guimond, first of all, can we count on you to make your presentation next Tuesday? It's important to realize that when a

matter is referred to us by the House, we are supposed to deal with it as quickly as possible.

• (1250)

Mr. Michel Guimond: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Because I have a reputation for being short and concise, I would like to know in advance how much time I will be given for my presentation.

The Chair: Mr. Guimond...

Mr. Michel Guimond: I want to prepare myself accordingly.

The Chair: I don't know. Ordinarily, witnesses are given ten minutes, and remember that we have already heard the arguments you made when you spoke in the House. If you want more time, I'm sure that members... Normally, you would have ten minutes.

Mr. Michel Guimond: In light of the fact that Ms. Line Carbonneau made a commitment to me two years ago that RCMP officers would always be bilingual, I would like Ms. Carbonneau to be informed that she will have to prepare herself psychologically for her appearance before the Committee. That could be Tuesday or Thursday, but she will need to prepare herself.

The Chair: Fine. I think we should hear from Mr. Guimond on Tuesday. We would then continue with Mr. Lahaie, accompanied by Mr. Desfossés, if possible. Then we could ask Ms. Carbonneau to appear at the following meeting, since we will already be hearing from the member who tabled the complaint and two other witnesses on Tuesday. I believe there will be a lot of questions for those witnesses and that we will use up all the time allocated for Tuesday. We could try to have Ms. Carbonneau appear on Thursday, if she is available. Would that suit everyone?

Mr. Michel Guimond: Yes.

The Chair: Are there any other comments?

The meeting is adjourned.

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