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The Honourable Roger Gallaway

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• (1550)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Roger Gallaway (Sarnia—Lambton, Lib.)): Order.

We're now in the public portion of our meeting.

This afternoon we welcome General Maurice Baril, who has been proposed as the chair of CATSA. The order in council has not been made. Pursuant to the Standing Orders, we've invited him here this afternoon.

We welcome you, General, to our meeting. It's very quiet here today, for a change.

I don't know if you have an opening statement that you would like to make, or if you wish to proceed to questions.

[Translation]

General Maurice Baril (Chairperson, Board of Directors, Canadian Air Transport Security Authority): Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I'll make a few comments because I rarely have the opportunity to say what I want before a committee such as this.

[English]

Mr. Chair, it's quite a thrill to come back in front of a standing committee of the House. I haven't done it for nearly four years. It brings back some great memories, and the bad memories I've forgotten about. It was always very challenging to face a committee.

To me, as head of the armed forces at that time, it was probably the most important link between the armed forces and our government, and also the population of Canada at large, because you do represent a great slice of the population. So it's good to be back. I'm very glad it is part of the selection process.

As you probably know, I retired from the armed forces after 40 years. I had the privilege and the honour to serve my country all across the country. I have been in all the provinces with my family. I served in Europe for four years, in the Middle East for...I don't remember how many times, in the U.S.A., and in Africa.

The last nine years of my service were particularly difficult and challenging, because those years were between 1992 and 2001. You're probably aware of what was going on in the world and in our country here. It was difficult for all of us who were in uniform, particularly for those who were in leadership. I was witness to, and part of, some of the great events that happened in our world in the 1990s. What happened at that time has changed me fundamentally and forever.

When I retired four years ago, I was more banged up than I thought I was. The last thing I was looking for was permanent employment at that time. I needed time to recharge the battery, be with the family, and see what was going on in my soul and my brain at that time. I did start getting involved again with foreign affairs, the United Nations, and a little bit with the private sector. It was not very much—a board of directors—and voluntary work also.

The privilege you have when you retire after having held a full-time job for 40 years is you choose what you're going to do. In my book at that time, I was choosing what I'd wanted to do, what motivated me, what I had a passion for, from my hobbies to my family to what I was getting involved in.

So this brings me in front of you today. In a way I'm asking what I'm doing here. I was contacted at home by what we call a headhunter, I guess. When that person mentioned what it was for, I thought it was to be a director of CATSA. I had read about it. I had, like many of you, suffered CATSA at some of our airports before, and I knew what they were doing, but I certainly didn't know in any great detail.

I was very impressed by the process that I was put through at that time. I was interviewed for about an hour and a half by the president of the company that was looking at us; I had an interview for about an hour with the selection committee of the board of directors; I had an interview with the minister, one on one, for about an hour. It was when I was interviewed by the members of the board that I realized they were looking for a chairman, not a director. It was kind of surprising.

At the same time, I was caught in it. I felt at that time that I was being asked to serve, and I was being asked to serve by my country. I was asked to serve in a field in which I had spent nearly all my adult life.

I felt at ease with the language. I understood the language. I was impressed by the process. I was impressed by the people I've seen and by what I read—I didn't have access to any of the classified stuff—and spent about two and a half hours with a senior executive last Friday to get a feeling of what the direction of CATSA was. I read all the documents they gave me. They have all the elements of good governance in place. All the good things are said, and I've been impressed.

So I have a good feeling about this thing. That's why I agreed to the minister's request to submit my name—because I think I can help.

[Translation]

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[English]

The Chair: Who has some questions?

I think Mr. Gouk will start.

Mr. Jim Gouk (British Columbia Southern Interior, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Baril, we've had numerous dealings with CATSA in the past, of course, coming before the committee, and at other locations as well. Some concern has been raised by a number of us about the accountability of CATSA. Some of the argument is that the government doesn't allow them to be accountable, but I'd like your position on accountability, in general terms.

Do you think it is appropriate that an agency such as CATSA be fully accountable to Parliament and to the committee, and if you're called before the committee, to disclose in committee such things that do not cause a problem with national security, and to disclose in committee, on request, at an in camera meeting, such things that are of a more sensitive nature?

• (1555)

Gen Maurice Baril: Sir, absolutely. I don't see how a crown corporation of that size, spending that amount of money for the citizens of our country and being responsible for a slice of the air security transportation in our country, would not accept mechanisms for transparency and accountability. Whether there is *tiraillement* here and there....

I was a member of the Canadian Forces, and let me tell you, sometimes it was difficult being transparent. It was not in our culture. But this is a new organization. It is transparent. The mechanisms are there. And of course, with the caveat you mentioned, that when security is involved it should be done in camera, I don't see why we shouldn't be able to do it. Sometimes there may be some technology that you can't discuss, or some very pointed and specific information that it would not be safe to share at that time. But I don't think it affects accountability. I've been involved in some security classifications that I can't even say I had, but it was always very surgical, what we had at that time. I don't think we can hide behind that.

Mr. Jim Gouk: Thank you.

There's one thing I've been particularly strong on. CATSA's operation is essentially described as risk management. Obviously, there is no possible way that you can prevent every possibility from occurring, and consequently you use your resources in the best manner you can to try to provide the greatest level of security.

We have a situation now where airport employees are subject only to spot checks. They often go through based just on their background check and on periodic spot checks. That's everything from high-level management people who go through there to window washers and floor cleaners, and everything in between. But we don't have anything like that whatsoever for travellers who travel frequently, who are prepared to go through the same kind of background checks and pay a fee the same as they would pay for the border process.

Would you say that's something that would require considerable effort to get into place, to reduce the attention paid to those generally referred to as "trusted travellers" and to focus your resources on areas of higher concern?

Gen Maurice Baril: I think it's the whole dilemma that's always there for travellers and airport security. I've travelled around the world in the past four years, and I've been in some places where a child could go around their security, although it appears to be good. In some places, it doesn't seem to be too tight but it's really good. It's the really good ones that have appealing approaches.

It's risk management, you're absolutely right. Somebody you put into the fast line because he operates a store inside doesn't get the same consideration and risk management approach that somebody you put through the fast line who's going to the airplane after. This is where you lose control of it.

We will never be perfect in any security we have, but the consequence of a mistake, or the consequence of having a process that is figured out by the bad guys, that they can pull through, is pretty damaging, and would be catastrophic for our country.

Confidence in a person should be there. When I go into an airport, I'm a terrorist until proven otherwise.

Mr. Jim Gouk: Okay, I'd just like to follow through on that, as I have a little time.

As I understand your answer, you're saying that it's an entirely different risk level, because one person is going to the store inside but not to the airplane, and the higher-risk person may be every bit as trustworthy, but he's going to the airplane, so we must have greater security. What happens when that person is subject to all of those checks and the person going to the store hands the goods to him once he's in? The risk level is the same for anybody who goes through.

Gen Maurice Baril: It is the same. There's always the danger that the fast lane.... I'm not saying I'm against.... I think the system in place has to be, and will be, improved to make travelling a little more pleasant than it is now, but there is always the danger that somebody who has access very quickly for some reason.... It might be that his child is held hostage, or something like that, and you have no way of knowing what is in his mind and what is on his body at that time. So how do we put them through a fast lane or a faster lane?

If you're going to Florida once every two years, you really don't mind waiting an hour in line, but if you're travelling every week, as I do, it gets to be pretty bothersome and difficult for the industry.

I heard discussion about the forward-looking capability they have. All the security has to be linked with the reliability of the people, the quality of the people, the quality of the equipment, the risk management, and the forward-looking.... You just can't be one step behind; you've got to be ahead.

• (1600)

Mr. Jim Gouk: Okay.

I will pose a challenge to you that I've already posed to the head guy in there now. Without using any credentials or connections whatsoever, and if I can get a letter so that I won't end up in jail for doing this, I will take any amount of neutralized weapons, explosive and non-explosive, through a variety of places, just to prove how easy it is to do. As I say, we're doing risk management, so we need to eliminate from the constant check the people who present the lowest risk, because they've submitted themselves to background checks. If the Americans can let us into the United States post-9/11 with a NEXUS card, surely to God we can look at something that is going to get people moving more quickly with less hassle through the lineups at Canadian airports.

Gen Maurice Baril: I agree it has to change.

As an example, two weeks ago we were in Washington, where I was accompanying a group of Canadian Forces students. We went through so many security places, including at our embassy, where we were X-rayed, searched, and everything else, yet 20 of us walked through the front door of the Pentagon without being asked for an identity check or going through an X-ray machine, or anything else. We walked right by the office of the Secretary of Defense. They have a procedure.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Gouk.

Madam St-Hilaire.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good afternoon, General Baril, and thank you for being here.

You spoke to us about your past, which is somewhat known. I would have liked to hear your views and to know how you see yourself as a potential Chairperson of CATSA. How do you envision air traffic security? First, do you feel there's security in Quebec, Canada and internationally? I'd like you to tell us first about your perspective before being Chairperson, then about your aspirations as potential Chairperson.

Gen Maurice Baril: I'm not a visionary, as they say. In my French Canadian and Catholic culture, a visionary is someone who has seen the Virgin Mary or who has had a vision of the future.

My vision is always based on the team around me, and I've been lucky enough to have had judgment, to have made good decisions and to have seen clearly what was ahead of me. I think there are good employees at CATSA, and the task is to synchronize all the talent there. The other 10 directors there come from across Canada and represent all specialties. I believe these are highly dedicated people. So I believe it will be quite easy to do that.

I believe our organization in Canada is secure, since there have not been any incidents. There have not been any incidents because no one has tried to cause any. When you remove the blades from my razor, you don't consider it as an incident that might have horrible consequences.

What kinds of attempts have been made to penetrate our security? I don't know because I don't think that would be discussed openly. I'll know a bit later what kinds of attempts have been made and what information has been gathered.

I know that my responsibility is to ensure that we constantly look to the future, that the agency is transparent for all the Canadians you represent and that we have a staff, training, quality control and technology that are at all times superior to those of people we think would do us harm. If we thought that no one was trying to cross and that there was no risk, we could cut costs and reduce problems at airports. This agency has been in place since April 2002, and it has done very good work to date. Like you, I've done a lot of travelling and have observed the distinct improvement that has been made since then. It was a bit amateurish at first, but I believe it's now very professional. I'll probably have a better vision of the direction we want to take in a month or two.

•(1605)

Mr. Robert Carrier (Alfred-Pellan, BQ): Good afternoon, General Baril. I want to speak to you as an ordinary citizen. We're here to represent our fellow citizens.

Of course, security in Canada has been considerably improved since the events that took place in the United States on September 11, 2001. We're reacting to those events. However, you also have to respect people's freedom of movement. It's good for there to be more security, but you have to understand we must respect people when they travel.

Earlier you said something in English, but I don't know whether I clearly understood. You seemed to say that everyone is a terrorist until proven otherwise. With an attitude like that, our relations with people are quite different from what they are when we think everyone's an honest citizen but that we have to ensure security. I'd like to have some clarification on that point.

Gen Maurice Baril: Mr. Chairman, I have to correct that. If I remember correctly, I said I'd had enough of being treated like a terrorist until proven otherwise. When I go into any airport, I get the impression we're all terrorists: we have to remove our belts, our shoes and so on. Unfortunately, in view of the current state of technology and information sharing, you have to check everything 100 percent in order to ensure security. We can't afford to let one percent through. That's what we have to do for the moment, but I hope that will improve. I believe we've already improved the situation by hiring more qualified people and acquiring better equipment, and that we're going to feel a bit less like terrorists in the future. I discovered that things were improving, but you're still not allowed to pass until they're convinced you have nothing dangerous in your possession.

Mr. Robert Carrier: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay.

Ms. Desjarlais.

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP): Thank you.

General, thank you for coming and for being quite frank with us as to what might and might not be possible with the information coming from CATSA.

I just have a slightly different question from what's been asked, and then I'll get into some of the more specific ones on security. You mentioned having been interviewed by a headhunter company. I'm curious, which company approached and interviewed you?

Gen Maurice Baril: I don't know if I can say it or not, but it's Renaud Foster.

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: Renaud Foster, okay.

You mentioned being on a board in the private sector. Which board were you on?

Gen Maurice Baril: I am a director on the board of Med-Eng.

Can I put in a plug, Mr. President, for the company?

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: Before you put in a plug for them, what do they do?

Gen Maurice Baril: I was just waiting for that question.

It's a company that I didn't know about when they approached me to be a director last year. They produce bomb disposal protection suits for bomb disposal guys; they are big, heavy, extraterrestrial suits. They are involved in producing protective equipment for both the military and the police. For that heavy equipment, they also produce personal cooling systems—a little fridge to cool you off. Also, they are diversifying into electronic protection measures, which I cannot go into more detail about here; it's industrial stuff.

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: Okay, so there's no chance there might be some conflict between your being chair and with a company involved in that?

Gen Maurice Baril: I asked that the first time I went before the board. I confirmed last Friday if CATSA was doing anything with them. CATSA has no responsibility for the wearing of Kevlar vests and bomb disposal; it's somebody else completely. Also, the electronic stuff the company is getting into now has nothing to do with CATSA.

As you know, CATSA has very specific rules on conflict of interest and how it can be handled.

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: Yes, there there are lots of rules mentioning transparency and accountability and everything. Everything's down as to how it should be, but we all know these are not always followed through, so I just wanted to clarify where things were at.

What exactly is your job as chair? What's your job?

Gen Maurice Baril: It's stated in section 10, I think, of the Financial Administration Act. To me, it's to lead the board of directors in overseeing the company on behalf of the Government of Canada, because we are appointed by the Government of Canada; that's our task.

•(1610)

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: So do you see the chain of command, so to speak, as being the minister and then yourself as CEO of CATSA? How does it flow?

Gen Maurice Baril: The corporation, through its board of directors and therefore the chairman, answers to the Government of Canada through the Minister of Transport. The Department of Transport is responsible for policy and direction, which we implement. We answer to the minister and department; the business plan and budget and everything go through the Minister of Transport.

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: You're new to the job, so you may not know this, and it may not be your responsibility, but I've been concerned as

to how certain airports were chosen as having to have security in place. From my perspective, there was never any real logical approach to it. I can certainly understand security at international points, and this kind of thing, but when you look at the number of airports throughout Canada where there is security, there is no logical rhyme or reason to it, from my perspective. In Manitoba, say we have two airports that have the same number of flights going through them and landing at the same terminal in Winnipeg, and one has to have security and one doesn't. So I'm curious as to whether or not you have any idea what the logistics are behind it where security is necessary and where it's not.

Gen Maurice Baril: I really don't know how it was done and how the priority was established based on the risk assessment of which airport should be there the first time. I really don't know either how airports are chosen to run the pilot programs that exist across Canada.

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: I'm also aware that airports have been exempted, and I believe one is in Quebec. Mont Tremblant was exempted after it was initially put on the schedule. So I'm curious as to what type of approach one takes or the reasoning behind exemption after one has had to have security.

Gen Maurice Baril: Can I guess?

It's probably linked to business transport. One of the threats that we are now dealing with is business flying, or business jets carrying ten people and landing and being serviced here at Esso or Shell. I don't know what kind of security they have now, but you can have a business jet land in Arnprior or Carp and take off and slam into a building in the USA. It would be a different tonnage hitting the building, yet it's still a jet coming in at 500 miles an hour. So that's a real concern, not only on our side in North America, but also on the U.S. side. There are thousands of business jets criss-crossing the sky every day. I fly a small airplane and take off and land at my airport, and nobody checks me out. It's a grass strip, and the only thing I could carry would probably be about 300 pounds of explosives. The threat is not big enough to intervene yet. But again, there is a measure of security at private airports, like the Rockcliffe Flying Club, and that kind of stuff.

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: Okay, that's fine for now.

The Chair: Mr. Bonin.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Bonin (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General Baril, good afternoon and welcome.

I have no doubt about your qualifications, your integrity or your intelligence. I think you're an excellent choice. I have no questions to ask. I just want to make a comment.

I want you to know one thing before leaving. I won't ask you any questions about the job because I want to give you a chance to have your first cup of coffee. I have much more confidence in people who examine the situation before changing the entire system.

I want you to know you're not entering a perfect system. The directors will try to convince you that it is, but that's not the case. When you enter an airport, they confiscate your nail file, just as they confiscate scissors from old ladies who want to knit on the plane. However, the last thing you buy before boarding is 40 ounces of rye in a glass bottle, and there's a cart with five or six bottles for those who haven't bought any. All that's much more dangerous than anything else. Sometimes you forget what's obvious.

I say that so you know they're doing a good job, but they aren't perfect. Every time they try to convince you of that, you'll at least know they can do better.

•(1615)

Gen Maurice Baril: Mr. Chairman, I want to thank Mr. Bonin for his advice. I've received it loud and clear.

Mr. Raymond Bonin: I'll leave you with that.

[English]

My colleague will take the rest of the time.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Wrzesnewskyj.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): General, thank you for appearing today.

I have just a quick question. I've had days when I've flown in and out of a number of airports where CATSA screens the passengers. I'm wearing exactly the same clothing, and I get pulled over in one because I set off the equipment and not in the other. Now, I understand that for reasons of secrecy we can't review what kinds of standards are being applied, but that seems to indicate to me that the standards are not even across the board. I find that puzzling. Why would that happen? It's a regular occurrence.

Gen Maurice Baril: I don't know the technical answer, but it has happened to me where I'll go through and I do not have enough magnetic stuff on me, like a belt buckle or the arch in my shoes. I can go through some in Canada, where the level of sensitivity is adjustable, by the way. In the U.S., I cannot go with my shoes on. I have to take them off. In Canada, it goes through.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: These are airports that CATSA is actually screening.

Gen Maurice Baril: In Canada, there are differences, yes.

I don't know. The sensitivity might be like a radar. It might have a bracket of sensitivity where it's acceptable, and you might have been just on the border.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: I'd like to follow up on something Bev touched on, and you have as well. Do we have a timeline for when we're going to have your agency provide screening in private airports?

You have Buttonville Airport in Toronto within minutes of downtown where you have a large number of private planes, where you have recreational planes. We do know that small planes were

looked at by terrorists, people with ill intent. They were looking at crop dusters and other small planes.

Is there a timeline to address that particular gap?

Gen Maurice Baril: No. I know it's a real concern, both in Canada and the U.S. and in Europe. I think in Europe they have had much tighter control on private aviation. In Canada, we're quite free. It's extremely difficult to go across the border now with our private airplanes, but it's still possible. There is a lot of responsibility on the pilot in command as to what he does with his airplane and everything.

So when it will be, I don't know. I'll find out in the next six or seven days when it is, because it has been a concern for me. I've been operating from private airports for quite a few years now. Security has always been my job, and I can see when there's none.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: I have another question, if I have a little bit of time left. From what I understand, there are RCMP officers on certain flights. Is that correct?

Gen Maurice Baril: Yes, it is.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: It's almost like layers of an onion. And you have that first layer where passengers are screened when they come in. You have some pretty impressive statistics on the number of...never mind nail clippers, but sharp objects or even guns that have been found.

I'm just curious, have there been cases where undercover RCMP officers have been able to stop a potential situation?

Gen Maurice Baril: I have not asked or been told whether it has happened, but I have been on flights that I knew had RCMP on board. It's not common knowledge which flights they are. You probably know some of them.

•(1620)

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: Where I'm going with that is I'm just wondering.... For instance, in certain airports I've walked right through with pens, and in others, the same day, I'm stopped.

And beyond that, I guess, the last layer of the security would be the reinforced cockpit doors. Has that now been fully implemented—I would assume for all Canadian airlines—for all international airlines arriving in Canada?

Gen Maurice Baril: I know quite a bit about airplanes. In the past three years, every airplane I've flown in has had reinforced doors in the cockpit. Not only that, but they have very specific procedures. When the door is open, for example, on U.S. airplanes, they'll have a serving tray across the door before the pilot comes out. On others, they'll have somebody standing in front when the door is opened.

It's quite obvious that there's a great deal of improved security. I like to watch that. The door would be pretty hard to bust through.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: Thank you.

The Chair: Okay.

We're going to go to Mr. Jean and then Mr. Scarpaleggia.

Mr. Jean.

Mr. Brian Jean (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for coming today, sir.

I'm from northern Alberta, and, as an Albertan, I spend a lot of time camping.

Gen Maurice Baril: You're in...?

Mr. Brian Jean: I'm from northern Alberta.

Actually, in 2004 I decided to go to Ohio for a trip. I took my backpack with me on the plane and went through three security devices with a large Olfa utility knife and a roll of duct tape, which I found in my pack when I got to Ohio. I never went to the national news with it, but it made me very afraid, actually. I went through security in Fort McMurray and Calgary and one in the U.S., and it went on every single flight.

Gen Maurice Baril: Was it carry-on baggage?

Mr. Brian Jean: Yes, a backpack.

It quite worried me, after I got there and first realized that I hadn't been arrested, which obviously would've happened if they'd caught me. It made me very afraid.

It appears to me certainly—and we've heard lots of these issues—that the security just can't pick up everything. I'm wondering, first of all, if you are prepared to look at innovative ideas as far as approaching security in airports, not only to heighten it, but also to move the lines through.

I am concerned about air travel. It certainly keeps our economy going. I see some innovations in the U.S. For instance, they have different lines for Americans to go through. I'm wondering if you've thought of or considered the same possibility for Canadian citizens.

Gen Maurice Baril: Thank you.

I certainly feel that it's one of my major responsibilities to make sure that we don't sit on the success that we have. If we're not forward-looking, some other people are forward-looking. We saw that on September 11, unfortunately.

If we are looking at all kinds of technologies and training to counter, you can bet that somebody is looking at countering what we're doing. If we want to stay one pace ahead all the time, we can't just prepare for the last fight that we won.

So if we're not, as we say in French, *à l'affût* continuously for new technologies, new approaches, new systems for detection, from having experts read body language in airports to other technologies, eventually we're going to fail.

Mr. Brian Jean: The last question I have for you is actually a request for some interaction here. Now that you've had an opportunity to study the job itself and an opportunity to see what you consider to be some of the areas you would like to improve upon, I'd like to hear what you consider to be your top three areas.

What would you like your accomplishments to have been subsequent to your finishing this job?

Gen Maurice Baril: I have not gone deep enough into the organization to be able to set what my priority would be now. If I gave you the three priorities, it would be off the top of my head, and I don't think it would be worth your time for me to tell you that. I don't do things that way, going into a place and threatening people—"I'm going to change everything; here are my priorities."

There are going to be eleven of us on the board of directors, and I think we're going to set those priorities as a team.

Mr. Brian Jean: Thank you, sir.

The Chair: Mr. Scarpaleggia.

[*Translation*]

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

Mr. Jean asked certain questions that I wanted to ask, but I have another one concerning the requirements you encounter at airports, on boarding, when you go through the detectors and so on.

Which of these regulations come from Transport Canada, and which ones come from an internal practice or the regulations of the agency? Are there two kinds of requirements, regulations or practices?

• (1625)

Gen Maurice Baril: Standards and requirements are undeniably established by Transport Canada, and it's up to the administration to enforce them. Some initiatives have definitely come from CATSA, but the directives that are issued don't include everything. The passenger safety experts are at CATSA, which applies the policies and directives. So it definitely has initiatives, but I don't know at what level or the framework that's provided for them by Transport Canada regulations.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: With respect to general policy, an inflexible policy is applied to airport arrivals. Twenty-five percent of passengers are inspected when they deplane. Is that done by Citizenship and Immigration or Revenue Canada - Customs and Excise?

Gen Maurice Baril: On arrival, it's Revenue Canada - Customs and Excise. In some countries, security is done on arrival. It's curious, but that's not the case here. On departing for the United States from Toronto, Ottawa and Vancouver airports, you have to go through a virtually identical security system. Your unaccompanied baggage is X-rayed in front of you, when you identify it. In Canada, unaccompanied baggage is checked, but not in your presence. There are various stages. Additional checks are done randomly on arrival: they inspect every seventh person who goes through the door. That's done in Ottawa, at all our airports and in the United States. They make a duty to tell you: it's not because you wear glasses that you're being inspected; it's because you're the eighth person.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: That's done at boarding.

Gen Maurice Baril: It's always done before passengers board the aircraft. In some countries, inspections are done before you enter the airport and anywhere in the airport.

Let me tell you about one incident. My son took the place at the Toronto terminal about three weeks ago. When he arrived at the departures ramp, the driver of an 18-wheel truck was asking how to leave the airport. He was lost. This isn't the responsibility of the agency's security, but an 18-wheel truck whose driver is lost and who enters an airport without a police officer even going to see him is a bit dangerous. You're not going to ruin the economy of the City of Toronto by blowing up an airplane.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Would your agency be responsible for lost trucks?

Gen Maurice Baril: Absolutely not. That's the responsibility of airport security.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Do you believe the seventh passenger rule is an adequate practice, or should officers instead be given responsibility for using their judgment more, and should they perhaps be even trained to recognize certain behaviour?

I had the pleasure of travelling to Israel with Minister Lapierre. Their approach is different, but they rely a great deal — and successfully — on officer training. Would you be prepared to meet those people? We met the chairman or the director of the Israeli Security Agency, and some good ideas took shape during our talks. I encourage you to meet those people as a first step because their approach is different. It will obviously have to be adapted to our situation. I believe it would be worth it.

Gen Maurice Baril: Thank you. I've also travelled to Israel, and I've seen the kind of security they have there. That's why I was talking about looking at body language. There are a lot of techniques, whether it's for personnel training, personnel quality, technologies or sharing information with our national and international agencies. Our agency has realized that this kind of sharing is necessary. We used not to share these well-kept secrets. Mr. Duchesneau told me last Friday that the Israelis had shared their techniques with other countries for the first time in South Africa some time ago. People are starting to share. Information sharing is another thing, but it's to everyone's advantage to share technology and procedures. We shouldn't be forced to reinvent the wheel when another country has established a procedure that's been working for five years.

• (1630)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Here in Canada, we obviously have restrictions related to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, restrictions they don't have in Israel, if I'm not mistaken. However, there may be a happy medium. Perhaps you could deal with that.

Gen Maurice Baril: Yes. Thank you very much.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Carrier.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Carrier: Mr. Baril, I need some clarification.

In the 2004 Annual Report, the first message is from the chairman of the board. I see from the press release that you'll be appointed to the position of chairman of the board. Are those two separate positions or are they one and the same?

In addition, I'd like to know whether the position to which you'll be appointed is a part-time position or a full-time position, or

whether we've retained your services for a given number of board meetings. I'd like to have some clarification.

Gen Maurice Baril: Mr. Chairman, my position is that of Chairperson of the Board. There is only one position. I don't want two.

Mr. Robert Carrier: It's because the press release talks about the board of directors.

Gen Maurice Baril: I've always referred to the board of directors. It may be the board, but there's only one position.

I work part time. In the regulations I've seen, it's stated that the number of days is limited to 135. I don't intend to work 135 days, unless we have serious problems. I'm not used to doing what other people are paid for, and there are very competent people there. My responsibilities are strategic direction, corporate governance and, especially, liaison between the Department of Transport and the Government of Canada.

I hope that won't take me 135 days because I have a number of other interests, but if I have to work 135 days, I'll do it. I don't think that'll be necessary.

Mr. Robert Carrier: So that's the maximum that was set.

Gen Maurice Baril: That's what's stated in one of the documents I saw. It may have been a document of the corporation or another agency, but I saw that figure and I remembered it. I think that's a lot.

Mr. Robert Carrier: If you're more efficient, it'll take you less than 135 days to do your work.

Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Ms. Desjarlais.

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: Thank you. I have just a couple of quick questions on the types of things that go through security or can't go through security. You mentioned you've been involved in risk management before.

With all the number of items that get collected at airport security—it gets mentioned in the paper, and everybody goes, oh my gosh—how many of the people who had those items were criminals? How many were charged?

Gen Maurice Baril: I hope somebody's going to give me the answer to that. I'm pretty sure it's classified.

Last week I was coming back to Montreal from Washington, and a very nice elderly gentleman lost ten minutes and held up the line because he couldn't break the little blade on his nail clippers. So it was counted as one incident for sure. The danger of this nail clipper in his baggage was zip.

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: It's one of those things that just totally frustrates passengers. It frustrates people, in the sense that you have items that are your personal belongings that you end up having to leave behind. I can mention stories of people who just went back, hid them in a washroom, and then picked them up later. I've heard it all.

I guess in what I would see as risk management, if you end up having two million items, and not one person would ever have been charged because they had those two million items, something's wrong with the system and maybe we're collecting things that don't need to be collected.

Following on that, Mr. Jean mentioned going through with his knapsack. You're really lucky, because if you carry a knapsack you usually get targeted. I actually gave up my knapsack and then wasn't targeted quite so badly. But if I could tell you the number of times my eye makeup has been checked, it would have your head spinning. I don't know what they expected to find in that little eye makeup container, but it was—

• (1635)

Mr. Raymond Bonin: After you put it on—

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: No, this was inside the makeup bag. One of my colleagues watched this one day and was just astounded. I said, just watch. It was one of those crazy things.

There's also the situation with matches, that somehow you're not supposed to carry matches. Then you could have up to four packs of paper-book matches, you could have one lighter—

Gen Maurice Baril: Lighters are out now if you fly to the U.S.

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: Okay, so the lighters are gone now. I'll spread the word.

I had been travelling with a box of matches from Vietnam for three or four months, at least, and then one day they became an absolute risk. So I questioned them. I had lots of time, so I thought I'd make their lives as miserable as they make mine and ask them where the rules were about these matches. The argument was, "Look, it's there. We can't let the matches in because they are wooden matches. There's some organic material." I'm thinking, four books of paper matches, a little box of wooden matches.... That was the logic behind it.

In my view, there's no logic behind it. So if you could come up with the great reasoning behind all those different things that end up not being allowed and then allowed.... If you made that your sole mission, I think we'd be happy. No, I'm kidding. It's just crazy.

Gen Maurice Baril: Message received. I think they have started information campaigns for the passenger to make it easier for the passenger. I'll make sure there's a paragraph explaining matches and lighters and all this.

Mr. Raymond Bonin: It's not a problem if you don't smoke a pipe any more.

The Chair: Well, General, I just wanted to ask you about something that you have raised, because you had said earlier the system in place will be and has to be improved. You made that statement in response to a question.

Yet how do you improve a system when you don't drive it? It's driven by Transport Canada. The regulatory framework is not yours. You're simply there to apply it. So what sorts of improvements are you looking for?

Gen Maurice Baril: Mr. Chairman, I was talking more of continuously improving the system, always looking at the

technology and training methods, and improving what we're doing, making things more efficient and safer. I think it's one of the two.

Regulation policy comes from Transport Canada, but I hope it's not—and I don't think that it is—dreamed up in a back room without consultation. I hope that there is back-and-forth consultation, and that before the regulations come to us we will have been consulted by the corporation, by the board of directors. I think this is where there is a need for communication, good liaison, good human contact between the corporation and Transport Canada and the Government of Canada.

I've always worked in that system. If there is no consultation it's pretty difficult.

The Chair: Well, I think this committee has had some experience with what is alleged to be Transport Canada consultation. I think you're much more optimistic than many of us here, in that case.

Second, I wanted to ask you something, because you also mentioned technology, and I certainly understand the aspect of better technology. Recently, many of us have been conducting an airport study. We've seen how technology, particularly with luggage, can be used to improve the scrutiny.

Having said that, we're also very aware that many people wearing a CATSA uniform are in fact employees of subcontractors. In the early days of CATSA—and I have no reason to believe that it's changed substantially—these employees of subcontractors were not particularly well paid: \$11 or \$12 an hour. Particularly in large centres such as Vancouver or Toronto, theirs is not what one would deem to be a sought-after job.

So I'm wondering, when you talk about training these people to engage in risk assessment, particularly around such things as what you described as body language, is it a realistic hope that it will occur?

• (1640)

Gen Maurice Baril: I don't know, but I don't think we can brush it aside, because that might be one of the most efficient deterrents we have besides technology. Contracting out the capability and the employees I think was in the act that created the agencies and the authority. It's the way they went.

I come from a background where we did not contract out. We hired our own people, recruited them, trained them, and buried them at the end. That was the way. It was a different place.

So having all our point persons—I was going to say point men—who are contracting out.... When I heard about it I felt a little odd, because I had the same impression as you. I thought they were all CATSA employees, every one of them. But CATSA remains the guardian of the standard, and is responsible for the establishment of the standard and its quality control. When there is a contract moving from one contract to the other because of the bidding, normally most of the employees go to the other contract. So you have people who are already trained and screened and ready to go.

As to not having the highest-paid employees, this is a fact of our economy, I guess, and a fact of our budget. How do we guarantee the reliability of the people we have who are paid only \$12 and \$14 an hour? I really don't know yet.

The Chair: I have a question. We've heard from a number of airport authorities that CATSA, being driven by Transport Canada regulation, requires changes to be made. I'm talking about physical changes within airports, new gates for employees and those sorts of things. When the work is to be performed and it's at CATSA's request, CATSA pleads poverty. What happens is that airports are paying for CATSA when in fact CATSA is dependent upon parliamentary appropriations. It's a rather capricious system that exists. For example, it may be that at Halifax they have to spend a couple of hundred thousand dollars to create a new gate at CATSA's insistence, yet CATSA has no money. We've heard much about this, and I think it's a rather distressing fact.

We also heard about a small airport in western Canada where a new commercial service was going to be started, and CATSA told them they had to wait because CATSA didn't have any money to install equipment. For a commercial enterprise, that's rather dismal, and for a crown corporation, which lives on public appropriations, it's rather shameful conduct.

What do you do as chair to correct that? You have experience as chief of the armed forces and you know something about appropriating money. How do you correct that as chair?

Gen Maurice Baril: Mr. Chair, I might be back in front of your committee quite often, because I was using the SCONDVA committee to pass some pretty harsh messages to the Government of Canada, ones just bordering on what we should not be speaking about at that time in uniform. But I certainly see allies in here, and that's one of the ways of doing it. I think it's probably one of my major responsibilities.

We have to be very responsible with the money of our taxpayers, but at the same time, we're talking about life and death and the security of our nation. We have to be careful; we cannot do it on the cheap, and I don't think we can pass the bucket to the other. We have to be responsible in what we do, and receiving a no is not a no the first time; I think it has to be a harder no than that.

The Chair: Mr. Gouk.

Mr. Jim Gouk: I just have an observation, Mr. Chair.

In fairness, General Baril, I recognize you haven't been on the job yet, but it might be very interesting, after you've been on the job for six months, to have you come back before us. We'll be able to ask you many of the same questions when you have had that experience and see what kinds of answers we get then.

Gen Maurice Baril: Please invite me, Mr. Chairman.

• (1645)

The Chair: Ms. Desjarlais.

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: I have a couple of questions. I'm just following up on Mr. Gallaway's comments about how you go about following through on the regulations and what changes.... I'm wondering whether within your authority, so to speak, you can make recommendations back to Transport Canada through that. Is it done through the CEO or is it done through the board? If you see something is ridiculously not necessary, can you make recommendations back that this should be changed?

Gen Maurice Baril: I really don't know the mechanism, but there has to be some mechanism to go back to the one who gave us an order that doesn't make sense.

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: I recognize you're new to the job, and maybe it's just a matter of getting this out there for us to get your thoughts in six months' time—should we still be here. Would you see flight attendants and counter attendants as part of the security process as well?

Gen Maurice Baril: I really don't know. We're talking about unions and responsibility and everything.

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: When we were having some discussions after 9/11, it kept coming up: well, you know, people are going to be told this is the kind of thing you look for, you watch for this; flight attendants need to be able to recognize this might be a situation with someone on the flight. Then, as we have more and more automated boarding pass sectors, I'm wondering how that machine is able to make that assessment. Because it had come up that they were part of the security process, I was curious if you would see them as part of that process.

The Chair: Well, there being no further questions, I can tell you, General—

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Chair, I have a point I'd like to raise after the—

The Chair: Okay.

We thank you for returning to Parliament Hill to a House committee today. I much appreciate your presence here. Thank you.

Gen Maurice Baril: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I wish you all the best. It's a challenging time you're facing.

The Chair: Mr. Scarpaleggia.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: I don't know if we need to go in camera for this, but given that the committee was very favourable to General Baril's credentials and received his comments very well today, and especially given the current context, which we know is uncertain, to say the least, I'd like to propose a motion, Mr. Chair, that we give our assent to the General's appointment.

Mr. Raymond Bonin: Could I ask you to seek unanimous consent?

The Chair: Do we have unanimous consent?

Mr. Jim Gouk: To do what?

The Chair: Would you like to read it again?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Sure. It's that the committee approves the certificate of nomination of Maurice Baril to the position of chairperson of the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority.

(Motion agreed to)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire: You're not going to make us regret that, are you?

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

We stand adjourned to May 30.

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