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**Chair**

The Honourable Shawn Murphy

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Friday, September 7, 2007

• (0900)

[English]

**The Chair (Hon. Shawn Murphy (Charlottetown, Lib.)):** At this point in time I would like to call the meeting to order.

Again, I want to welcome everyone here today. This meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts is again dealing with the circumstances related to the RCMP pension and insurance plans, released June 15, 2007.

At this meeting, colleagues, we're pleased to have with us three witnesses. The first witness is William Elliott, the present Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. On behalf of the committee, Mr. Elliott, I want to congratulate you on your appointment and wish you all the best as you go on with your duties in this very important job.

We also have with us retired Commissioner Beverley Busson. Beverley Busson has been before the committee on several occasions before. I think I'm right in saying that this will most likely be her last appearance before this committee on this particular issue. Mrs. Busson is now living in British Columbia and she has made special arrangements to be here. As always, she has been very cooperative with the committee and I want to thank her very much for all the efforts she has given to this committee.

Third, we're very pleased to have with us Linda Duxbury, professor at the School of Business at Carleton University. Mrs. Duxbury has written articles and done extensive research into people management at the RCMP and she will be available to present her key findings.

I understand that Commissioner Elliott has some opening remarks as well as Mrs. Duxbury. I would add that we usually like to keep opening statements to five minutes.

Commissioner Elliott, I'll ask for your opening remarks.

[Translation]

**Commissioner William Elliott (Commissioner, Royal Canadian Mounted Police):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am pleased to be able to appear before your committee today. As you know, I became Commissioner of the RCMP less than two months ago. When my appointment to the position was announced on July 6, 2007, I said:

[English]

It is critically important for the RCMP to continue its long and proud history and to build on its many strengths, working with communities across Canada and with its partners domestically and internationally, to ensure that the RCMP is a

modern, efficient and effective organization that provides Canadians with the highest quality police services.

[Translation]

A police force which fosters an environment of teamwork, integrity and respect and in which all Canadians can continue to be extremely proud.

[English]

The last few weeks have certainly confirmed my view.

My first priority has been to get to know more about the RCMP and the essential services we provide to Canadians and to meet with men and women of the RCMP where they work across Canada.

So far, I have visited employees in offices, laboratories, and detachments in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Quebec. I've also met with staff and with cadets at the RCMP Training Academy in Regina, recognized internationally as one of the finest police training centres in the world. I've also met with a number of employees here in Ottawa. My plan is to visit every RCMP division as quickly as my schedule will allow.

In my travels I have been greatly impressed by the professionalism and dedication of the women and men I have met, from regular members serving in remote detachments in aboriginal communities to detachment clerks supporting municipal policing, from scientists and technicians working to improve our laboratory services to dog handlers, from instructors at Depot and drug enforcement officers in Montreal to those supporting national security investigations, in all ranks and in all classifications, be they public servants or civilians or regular members of the RCMP.

I have been impressed but not surprised. The RCMP, admittedly, has its shortcomings, but it is widely respected in Canada and by our international partners.

• (0905)

[Translation]

The people I have met are dedicated to the RCMP and to the communities we protect. I am in no doubt that our employees provide first-rate policing services. They can be justly proud of the work that they are doing, as I am proud of the work that we are doing. I have also met the senior management team and the senior executive committee as well as the staff relations representative national executive committee.

[English]

The SRR program, as it is known, functions as the official labour relations program for regular and civilian members and special constables across Canada. In addition, I have met with representatives of the Union of Solicitor General Employees. In short, I have seen a lot of really good work being done by an exceptional group of people.

The RCMP certainly has its challenges. These need to be addressed if we are to continue to provide the level of service Canadians rightly expect from us. A number of issues have been brought to light as a result of this committee's study of the *Report of the Independent Investigator into Matters Relating to RCMP Pension and Insurance Plans*, by David Brown's report itself, and by chapter 9 of the November 2006 *Report of the Auditor General of Canada*.

As you know, on July 16 the government established a task force to examine governance and cultural change in the RCMP. The task force is chaired by David Brown, and its membership includes Linda Black, Richard Drouin, Norman Inkster, and Larry Murray.

I have asked Deputy Commissioner Bill Sweeney to lead the RCMP's work with the task force, aligning our activities to respond in a timely way to its needs. Early in August Deputy Sweeney and I met with Mr. Brown to extend the RCMP's full and unqualified cooperation.

An executive steering committee for the RCMP's work in relation to the task force has been established, composed of Deputy Commissioners Sweeney, Killam, and Bourduas. The task force's executive director, Bill Austin, will serve as an ex officio member of the steering committee. The staff relations representatives' national executive committee will also serve on a strategic advisory role to the steering committee.

[Translation]

My first meeting with the five members of the working group took place on August 22, 2007. We exchanged preliminary information about the mission, the structure, the government processes and the accountability framework of the RCMP.

[English]

At the request of Mr. Brown, on August 16 we distributed a letter electronically from the chair of the task force to all employees of the RCMP. The letter is also being distributed to members of the RCMP Veterans' Association. The letter provides information about the task force and solicits views on any of the matters set out in the task force's mandate.

In my discussions across the country and in my electronic broadcasts to all employees, I have encouraged employees to take advantage of the opportunity to communicate directly with the task force. In fact, the RCMP's Internet site contains a link to Mr. Brown's letter so employees can easily find the coordinates for the task force.

I have also stressed the importance of establishing and maintaining open lines of communication within the RCMP. I have encouraged employees to discuss their ideas and concerns, and to make their views known to their commanding officers, or directly to me. In fact, a number of employees have already communicated directly with me by e-mail. Their input will inform our work and that

of the task force as we consider the eight specific matters set out in the task force's mandate.

As I said at the change of command ceremony that took place on August 10, the RCMP must build on our strengths, recognize and address our weaknesses, and live up to the highest standards that we set for ourselves and that Canadians rightly expect of us.

I look forward to our session today and to the committee's report, which I trust will assist the RCMP and me as commissioner in identifying steps to be taken in furtherance of these objectives.

[Translation]

Thank you for your attention. I would now be pleased to answer your questions.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Elliott.

We're now going to hear from Linda Duxbury.

Ms. Duxbury, I have a copy of your remarks. Perhaps it's not your remarks; it may be a study that you did.

●(0910)

**Professor Linda Duxbury (Professor, Sprott School of Business, Carleton University):** I was going to say I don't have a copy of my remarks. If you have one I'll read it.

**The Chair:** I'm looking at "People Management at the RCMP: Key Findings". You weren't intending to go over that, were you?

**Prof. Linda Duxbury:** Well, I could if you have a day and a half. I was just going to actually outline what I did and give you a few key observations. That's all.

**The Chair:** My only point is that we'd like to restrict it to five minutes. That's all.

**Prof. Linda Duxbury:** That's not a problem. I understand. I have the rules.

I think I thank you for inviting me. I'm not sure. We'll wait and see how I feel at the end of the process.

I am an academic, and how I first got exposed to the RCMP was when we did a very big national study on work-life balance and stress. Thirty-three thousand people, 100 organizations, and the RCMP participated in that, because at the time the commissioner was Murray, and he was very interested in understanding about his people.

We then had several thousand people from the RCMP volunteer to participate in follow-up work. We interviewed 300 people who participated in the time one study. We surveyed them and we interviewed them at length about various things. So my observations are based on looking at the same individuals over two points in time, the first just after the change in leadership and the second several years after the change in leadership.

Before talking about our findings, it is really important for me to emphasize that in fact the majority of the RCMP are wonderful individuals who care about their country and really want to make a big difference. It is important to emphasize that, because members of the force I talked to feel, in many cases, that we're throwing out the baby with the bathwater. We're painting everybody in a negative light when in fact the majority care about the job. They care about what they do, and they are doing a fabulous job.

That being said, my report indicated that there were some pretty significant issues. For example, we found that almost 40% of people in the lower two ranks of the RCMP at time two said very bluntly that they would recommend that their own children not join the RCMP. And almost half of our sample said they were planning on leaving early and working somewhere else and not even collecting their pensions because of certain situations within the RCMP.

I had to read my report, actually, just before I came, which is why I don't want you to have to do it, because I hadn't read it for a long time. There are only a few things that I think are really important. Well, there are a number of things. You should all read it. Nevertheless, there are a few things that I want to emphasize.

The first is that I pointed out in the report that the culture of an organization—which is the way we really do it around here—as opposed to the policies that are on the books can be the greatest strength of an organization or it can be its biggest weakness. A real problem arises when an organization that has been hugely successful in the past doesn't recognize how the environment has changed around it. It keeps its culture the same and does not change its culture to adapt.

I note in the report that there has been tremendous change in Canada. There was 9/11, which affected the RCMP. There were very big demographic shifts in terms of there now being dual-income couples, increased family demands, labour force shortages, and so on.

The problem in the culture that I noted was a huge focus on work, not family, if you work for the RCMP. This increased over time. There was nothing more important to you than the force. Workloads increased phenomenally, and people put in phenomenal hours. People said that they didn't think the policies of the RCMP were supportive. They didn't feel comfortable. They thought they would be punished if they used the supports that were available. They disagreed that there were open and respectful discussions within the organization, and they all agreed that the RCMP in fact discouraged the use of the policies that were there that were supportive. They said that the culture emphasized work or family, and they thought that if they said no to more work, they would be punished or it would be a career-limiting move.

What was very interesting was that the interviews identified another facet of the culture, which I labelled at the time “playing the game”. It was about 15% to 20%. But if you looked at the constable, corporal, sergeant, and staff sergeant ranks, it was a much higher percentage who said they were irritated with the politics that went on in the organization. They really liked their own immediate work area. They liked their own bosses. How they were really buffering themselves was by staying where they were and concentrating on the job. They wanted to stay where they were because they were less

likely to have to deal with the politics of the organization and less likely to have to play the game. A significant group perceived that a promotion within the RCMP was based on who you knew and how you played the game rather than on competencies.

The other really very interesting difference was that our research really shows that people don't work for an organization; they work for who they report to. We did see a dramatic increase in non-support of management and a decrease in support of management over time. That was most profound at the sergeant and staff sergeant level, who would be reporting directly into the top level. They went from 80% liking their managers and saying their managers were supportive at time one, to about 40% at time two, so a very significant drop.

● (0915)

What they were frustrated with was the top-down style of management, non-supportive managers who don't trust or respect their members, managers' inability to communicate effectively with staff, politically driven agendas, managers who are perceived to be careerists who are governed by their personal agendas, and managers who did not walk the talk. They also indicated that managers made it harder for them to be productive, because they had poor people management skills, used command-and-control style of management, made decisions with incomplete information, were not effective at communicating what was to be done, micromanaged their people, etc., and reduced innovation.

That basically is what I wanted to say.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Duxbury.

Retired Commissioner Busson, any opening comments?

**Ms. Beverley A. Busson (Commissioner (Retired), Royal Canadian Mounted Police):** No. I'll leave my comments for the commissioner as representing the force.

**The Chair:** Yes, and of course you've been here before too.

Just before we go to the first round, colleagues, again I want to urge members to keep all their questions brief, to the point, and relevant. We're talking here about the purpose of this meeting, which is, in my view anyway, to focus on the future, to consider governance issues and checks and balances so that the correct accountability regime is in place.

Again, to the witnesses, I would ask that the answers be short and relevant also. We have three, I consider, very helpful witnesses here today, so let's use them to our advantage.

The first round, seven minutes, Mr. Wrzesnewskij.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Ms. Busson, for appearing before us again.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank you. You took on a very difficult job. Especially when it comes to the pension and insurance fund, the rigged contracting, alleged cover-ups, you weren't left with an easy task as an interim commissioner, but overall, I think you did tremendous things during that short period of time, and especially in dealing with what's at the core of a lot of this—the culture within the RCMP and what's been called the corrupted culture in the top echelons.

Human resources can be an incredible tool. As Ms. Duxbury seemed to reference, it can be used in positive ways and negative ways. We heard about punitive transfers, constructive dismissals, also wrongdoers who were rewarded and, when it no longer became tenable because they had been outed, provided with soft landings.

So I'd like to thank you, first of all, for acknowledging the people who had the fortitude in that particular culture to keep their principles and to step forward. You had that private dinner, but with a public commendation for those individuals.

But just before you left, you also dealt with Mr. Gauvin, and he's referenced in Mr. Brown's report. I guess his testimony was given a couple of days before the report was tabled, and that information wasn't available at the time. Many people feel that you provided Mr. Gauvin—it was untenable for him to remain—with a soft landing. I'd like to ask you why.

Just before you answer, I'd like to read from page 44 of Mr. Brown's report. He says:

While Commr Zaccardelli felt strongly enough to ask Mr. Ewanovich to step down when he was briefed on the results of the internal audit, he allowed Mr. Ewanovich to have what can only be described as a "soft landing". Mr. Ewanovich continued as an employee of the RCMP, drawing a salary, earning pension entitlements and working out of another nearby building. His constant visibility to those who had laboured so long to have the issues under his management exposed served to confirm some views that different rules applied to the management class.

We've read about that from the report that Ms. Duxbury had provided to us. Why the soft landing for Mr. Gauvin?

• (0920)

**Ms. Beverley A. Busson:** With all due respect, Mr. Gauvin is a civilian member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** As Mr. Ewanovich was.

**Ms. Beverley A. Busson:** Well, they had different levels of tenure and different levels of employment. Mr. Ewanovich wasn't a civilian member of the RCMP; he was a contract member of the RCMP, which is somewhat different.

That having been said, it was clear in the Brown report that Mr. Gauvin was, from Mr. Brown's findings, responsible for some of the lack of oversight with respect to how the pension fund found itself in the situation that it did. After the Brown report came out, Mr. Gauvin came to me and said that he was prepared to accept responsibility from the Brown report and was prepared to step down as the chief financial officer. It was clear at that point in time that there was very little other avenue to take.

As for the process with the RCMP for a civilian member, if we were to consider that level of accountability as something for dismissal, we would start a code of conduct process, and it would

take up to two or three years to seek Mr. Gauvin's dismissal at the time and under the circumstances—

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** Ms. Busson, if I may interject, it obviously appears that it was a difficult decision and the circumstances were difficult. Could you provide us with perhaps a written explanation, in consideration of the time limitations here; then perhaps we could move on. We could then get a comprehensive understanding. I think it might be a little easier that way.

I'd like to move on to—

**The Chair:** Mr. Williams has a point of order.

**Mr. John Williams (Edmonton—St. Albert, CPC):** Yes, Mr. Chairman, I understand Mr. Wrzesnewskyj's idea of wanting to get in twenty questions in eight minutes. But Ms. Busson is now retired from the RCMP. She doesn't have the whole organization of the RCMP to provide these written answers. Let her give the answer right here. That's the name of the game. We can't expect individuals to provide a written answer to people later on.

**The Chair:** It's not a point of order, Mr. Williams. If Ms. Busson cannot give the information, Ms. Busson is quite capable herself of telling us that. If she can, she's invited to do so. That is not a point of order.

**Ms. Beverley A. Busson:** If the committee wishes, I'd like to continue to answer the question.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Ms. Busson.

**Ms. Beverley A. Busson:** At the end of the day, Mr. Gauvin accepted responsibility, as the Brown report dictated that he ought to. He has no responsibility with regard to the CFO job. He is gainfully employed, working on some projects with regard to relocation of some of our headquarters, and will be retiring after that period of time.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** Thank you.

Mr. Elliott, the week of the Brown report... I'm sure you're very busy, but I think you've probably read some of the transcripts, especially since there are serious issues at stake. Just days before, it became clear in an appearance here, from testimony from an officer that was well documented—we had testimony and documents that showed it—Mr. Gauvin had called this officer into the commissioner's board room, just before he was to release documents under an ATIP request for the commissioner's expenses. What he attempted to do at that time was this. He'd cooked up a different set of documents in the comptroller's offices, and he was trying to put pressure on this officer to do a switcheroo—to take away those original documents and supply the documents that had been prepared. We've heard that testimony.

If we were able to find that out in the committee here, then have you launched any sort of investigation into Mr. Gauvin's office? There must be other things. If we were able to shake that out, have you begun the process of investigating what the goings on were and what some of the things were that were taking place in Mr. Gauvin's office?

**Mr. John Williams:** I take offence at some of the language at this table. I mentioned that yesterday. Here we have a member talking about “cooking the books” and “switcheroos” and documents being “switched at the table” and so on. Parliamentary privilege is not for these kinds of allegations that are unfounded and thrown out there in the public domain.

• (0925)

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** I'd just like a response to that.

**Mr. John Williams:** Mr. Chairman, I would ask that you ensure that the members of this committee act with decorum and probity, because these types of allegations can't be tolerated.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** I'd like to respond to that, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** I'll ask Mr. Wrzesnewskyj for a response, then I'm going to invite Mr. Elliott to answer the question, and then we're going to move on to the next examiner.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** Mr. Williams heard the exact same evidence as everyone on this committee heard.

When the officer appeared, he had the documentation to support his allegations. He made it very clear in his testimony that pressure was brought to bear on him to remove the documents that were ready, signed off, and supposed to go out, and replace them with documents he had prepared in his offices and passed on to the officer in the commissioner's board room at that particular meeting. So those documents were prepared in the former comptroller's office. He wanted to switch them for the documents that were to be sent out.

So I don't think there's anything in dispute in terms of what we heard. Mr. Williams is invited to check the transcripts.

**The Chair:** Commissioner Elliott.

**Commr William Elliott:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

When I became commissioner Mr. Gauvin was no longer the chief financial officer, and I instigated no investigations into his actions prior to my becoming commissioner.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Wrzesnewskyj.

Thank you, Commissioner Elliott.

Monsieur Laforest, *sept minutes*.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Yves Laforest (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

Mr. Elliott, I was quite surprised, shocked and disappointed when you made your introductory remarks earlier, such as when you mentioned “some shortcomings” at the RCMP. That shocks me. We need only remember the Maher Arar affair, Air India, the incompetence in the Airbus affair, never-ending RCMP sponsorship inquiries, the scandal involving the Minister of Human Resources Development and the fraud involving the RCMP pension and insurance plans. I feel that you are significantly playing down events that, in my view, have greatly tarnished the RCMP's image in Canada and Quebec. When you start your mandate by trivializing these shortcomings, it leaves me very skeptical.

Before being appointed RCMP commissioner, you were a special adviser to present Prime Minister Stephen Harper and to his predecessor Mr. Martin. You held the position of special advisor on public safety when a number of these events took place. In the Maher Arar affair, you even acknowledged that you were actively involved in the decision that led to a significant part of the O'Connor report being censored. Between 1,500 and 2,000 words of that report were deleted before it was made public, showing that the government knew what had happened to Mr. Arar. This was a complete lack of transparency. You are now the head of an organization that is need of reform and to become much more transparent to boot.

You said that you have met a number of RCMP employees in a number of places over the summer. I think that it is just as important that you also meet the public. That would let you understand that the esteem in which the RCMP is held has lessened considerably. Given that your past is marked by a lack of transparency, I am not confident that you are the man to bring about the needed reforms. Both my party, the Bloc Québécois, and I feel that only a public inquiry can uncover the shortcomings. You mentioned some, but I am talking about all the problems that the RCMP has experienced in recent years, and even those that remain concealed. I think the public needs to know, and that it has the right to know.

As to the Maher Arar affair, specifically with regard to the entire matter that led to Justice O'Connor producing his report, I would like you to tell us if you participated in discussions prior to the report and in the decision to censor it. Was that part of your work?

• (0930)

[*English*]

**Commr William Elliott:** Well, Mr. Chairman, there's one question and several statements. I'm happy to respond to the question, but I guess I look to you for some direction with respect—

**The Chair:** It took him 45 seconds to do so, too.

**Commr William Elliott:** First of all, with respect to the honourable member's question, during the conduct of Mr. Justice O'Connor's inquiry I was in a number of different positions—I think three, actually—over the relevant period. I was an official of the Privy Council Office, first the assistant secretary for security and intelligence and then the national security adviser, and prior to the final decisions being taken by the government I had moved on to the Department of Public Safety. Throughout that period, I was involved in the government's work to support Mr. Justice O'Connor, and I participated in discussions and the recommendations to the government with respect to issues relating to the report, including matters relating to redaction. The decisions were decisions of the government. I, as a bureaucrat, as an official, made recommendations to the government in confidence, and I'm not in a position to speak to those recommendations.

With respect to some of the honourable member's other comments, certainly the government was aware of the information that was redacted, and certainly Mr. Justice O'Connor was aware of that as well. He himself, with respect to the redacted version of the report, indicated that he felt he was able to get the information that he needed to make his findings and recommendations.

[Translation]

You used the word “some”. I did not use that word in my presentation.

[English]

I indicated that the RCMP has a number of weaknesses. I indicated that we need to recognize and address those weaknesses, and I certainly am prepared to do my part as commissioner to do just that.

**The Chair:** Very briefly.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Yves Laforest:** The French version clearly indicates that “some shortcomings” must be acknowledged. That is how it is written. Mr. Elliott, I would like you to give us more information on why the O'Connor report was censored. You have said that you were actively involved, so why was it censored to the extent that 2,000 words were removed from the report that the media and the public saw?

[English]

**Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC):** On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, I look at the orders of the day, and it says, “Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), Study of the Report of the Independent Investigator into matters relating to the RCMP Pension and Insurance Plans” is what we're actually studying today, not the Air India inquiry or the Maher Arar affair. So I would suggest that this member be put back on track as far as the orders of the day are concerned.

**The Chair:** Yes, that point is correct. We're talking about the RCMP. But there is a component—and Mr. Elliott would be aware of it—of the Maher Arar inquiry and the O'Connor report that's very, very applicable to the RCMP and the governance and some of the recommendations that were made by Judge O'Connor that are extremely relevant and extremely applicable to the discussions going on here today. So there is a very close relation to not the actual Maher Arar inquiry but the O'Connor report. I consider it very relevant to the discussions.

He's out of time. I'm just going to ask for a final comment from Commissioner Elliott on that issue.

• (0935)

**Commr William Elliott:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think the process with respect to redactions is well known. The government of the day took decisions. The decisions were subsequently challenged before the Federal Court. The Department of Justice, on behalf of the government, explained to the court why the government took the view they did.

The government's view was that portions of the report should not be made public for reasons of national security. The court upheld the government's position with respect to many of the things that the government redacted, and the court disagreed with the government's position with respect to other things that have now been made public.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

[Translation]

Thank you very much, Mr. Laforest.

[English]

Mr. Lake, for seven minutes.

Again, I urge members to keep their questions short and relevant to the issues we have before this table.

Mr. Lake, seven minutes.

**Mr. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont, CPC):** Thanks, Mr. Chair.

As I mentioned yesterday, I've been looking forward to these two days because it seems that we're now largely in the moving forward phase of this process. I understand there are still some loose ends to clean up.

But I want to start by saying, Ms. Busson, that I commend you for your leadership role. This is a tremendously difficult time. I can't imagine how difficult it was for you to do the work you had to do in an organization that you care so much about and to have to go through what you went through, and you did it tremendously, so I commend you for that.

Mr. Elliott, when I listen to Ms. Duxbury's comments, it hits home how tremendously difficult your job is going to be. I want to know a little bit about your travels and discussions with members across the country. What are you hearing from them? How is morale at this point in time, and what are they saying that they want to see changed?

**Commr William Elliott:** Thank you.

First of all, the work that Ms. Duxbury did is very important work. We do have more recent relevant data. The RCMP has been quite engaged in conducting comprehensive surveys of its employees, and if I can, I will just give you a couple of those results.

The surveys that I'm referring to took place in 2003, 2005, and 2007, and the employees responded as follows. On whether RCMP employees are treated fairly, in their most recent response, 50% answered in the affirmative, up from a low of 42%. On whether RCMP colleagues treat each other with respect, the most survey results were in the affirmative at 69%, up from 59%. On whether they are strongly committed to making the RCMP successful, the response was 92%, up from 89%. And whether they are satisfied with their career in the RCMP, the response was 73%, up from 67%.

I'm not suggesting those results are as positive as we would like them to be, but I think there is some movement in the right direction.



As I've met with employees across the country, I've been quite struck by the positive response I have received. A number of people have candidly indicated they were disappointed that someone from outside the organization was appointed, but everyone with whom I have spoken has said that we need to address a number of issues, and they certainly have not been shy about raising issues with me. And I would say they take great pride in their work. There is certainly some hurt in the organization; I think there is some feeling that things were done inappropriately and that it has tarnished the reputation of the entire force and tarnished the reputation of all the men and women who are providing services. They believe they provide excellent services. I believe that as well.

The suggestion was also made that I should be speaking to Canadians. I have met with a number of our partners and stakeholders. I have met with representatives of provincial governments; I have met with municipal officials; I have met with aboriginal leaders. And again, no one is saying, either inside the organization or outside it, that the organization is perfect, as we do have some serious issues to address, but I think people are quite positive and quite optimistic. I think that with the work we are doing in support of the task force, people are looking at it with some expectations that real change can take place.

● (0940)

**Mr. Mike Lake:** Further to that, we talk a lot about the culture of the RCMP, which we've heard many times in here, and the need to change it, but it's a big ship to turn around.

Yesterday we had the new ethics adviser, Sandra Conlin, here, and I have to say I was a little bit concerned at times with what I heard during the testimony. We were asking for specifics on ideas for structural changes, and her comments seemed to centre around her confidence in you and the will of the leadership to change the culture. It seemed again to be character-based on the commissioner, under the assumption that we have a good commissioner so everything is okay. But who knows? That may not always be the case.

Though I understand that the task force is doing its work so there's not necessarily a plan being implemented right now, I do want to know what structural changes you think are needed with respect to the RCMP governance structure. Maybe you could give us some specifics.

**Commr William Elliott:** I would certainly agree with the premise of your question. We need to have mechanisms and processes in place to support the kind of culture that I referred to in my opening comments, a culture of fairness and respect. It should not only be dependent on individuals. Of course, you need to have individuals who both believe in and live out the values of the organization, and you need to have structures and processes that support those values.

Having said that, on the day I became commissioner, the government somewhat coincidentally announced the creation of the task force and gave it a fairly specific mandate to address eight issues, as I've mentioned. We are busy supporting their work. I don't actually anticipate that we will introduce wholesale changes to the organization of the RCMP in advance of the work of the task force or even with respect to formulating views as to what the appropriate mechanisms and structures would be.

It's fairly early days, and as I've said, I've been on the job less than two months. But our work, some of which was started before the task force was created and was instigated by Commissioner Busson, will certainly be focused on our making presentations and representations to the task force and then responding to its report and recommendations.

**Mr. Mike Lake:** Finally, David Brown's report recommended that the folks who came forward and pushed this issue so commendably would be commended for their actions. Have you've already recognized them in some way?

**Commr William Elliott:** They received commendations from Commissioner Busson prior to my arrival. I've taken no further steps.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Commissioner Elliott.

Mr. Christopherson, for seven minutes.

**Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Thank you very much, Chair.

I thank you all for coming today.

Let me comment that I heard my Bloc colleague, and I respect that that's what he hears, but I want to convey to you that Canadians have not lost their pride in and support for the RCMP. What they have is a crisis of faith in terms of its ability to live up to the standard that Canadians hold it to. I would disagree with our starting point.

I also want to say that in terms of your appointment, Commissioner, I don't think it's necessarily a negative thing that you're not from the RCMP. Bringing somebody in from the outside is sometimes the right thing to do. I don't think the fact that you're not a sworn officer and you're not a police officer, in and of itself, is a stopper. I do, however, think the government imposing both of those kinds of changes at the same time as we have another crisis going on was not prudent. I only want to put it on the record. I don't think this was the right time for those changes, and I think it's needlessly made your job more difficult.

Having said that, before I go back to comments to you, I want to thank former Commissioner Busson.

I agree with my colleagues. I believe and hope you'll feel unanimous all-party support in that you did a fantastic job. Every time you came here, it was clear in your eyes, words, and actions and in your responsiveness to Parliament that you were doing everything humanly possible to bring the RCMP back to where they needed to be. It's not always easy to do that. I understand the viewpoint. But you did a tremendous job for the RCMP and for Canada. This Parliament is proud of you. Thank you for what you've done.

To the current commissioner, on one of the big changes you need to make, you talked about the rank and file and everybody else, but quite frankly, most of the damage was done by very senior officers. If it weren't for the more junior ranks stepping forward and rising to the standard of the RCMP, we wouldn't be here today. Can you tell me what you see as the next steps to instill that in the senior officers? For the most part, overwhelmingly, they're stellar officers, but there were clearly many who were very disappointing and did serious damage. How are you going to go about changing it, recognizing that there are literally tens of thousands of uniformed officers out on the streets who are looking to you to fix the senior management so they can go on believing in the RCMP that they joined?

• (0945)

**Commr William Elliott:** Thank you very much.

I must say that when I indicated I was struck by the positive response I have received, that applies not only to members serving in detachments in other places across the country, but also to the senior executive.

There have been a number of changes to the senior executive in the last while under Commissioner Busson's tenure and subsequently. We've just appointed a new acting chief human resources officer, Assistant Commissioner Clark. I guess you could categorize a number of the issues we need to address as human resource issues. I have brought in a very well-respected senior deputy commissioner from the northwest division, Deputy Commissioner Bill Sweeney. He is certainly a very good addition to the headquarters team. We have an acting chief financial officer. We'll have to take steps in the near future to fill that position.

So there are a number of changes. I would certainly say that the senior executive and the senior management team of the department, which includes the commanding officers across the country, have very much embraced the task force and the work we are doing to identify positive changes.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Of course, you do know that the proof's going to be in the pudding. It's going to be what happens after this report, whether it's fulsome enough, and then going about implementing it.

But again, I would strongly urge you to recognize that from our viewpoint literally all of the uniformed, on-the-street, front-line officers are looking to you for the change that will be brought not only by you as the commissioner, but by those senior ranks. Every time I talked to front-line officers, that was the most disappointing thing. It wasn't necessarily that there was human frailty—these things happen—but that there was so much of it in the very senior ranks. It's demoralizing, because if the top doesn't believe, why the heck should anybody on the street believe? They're the ones out there putting their lives on the line. So that is really critical.

I have so many questions.

Professor, I want to ask you two quick things. I'm curious. I went through your report and happened to notice—and I'm sure there's a logical reason, it just sticks in my craw, and I can't figure out what it is—pages 8 and 9 of the report that was circulated talk about male employees specifically. I couldn't find where there was a separation between females and males. All of a sudden there were these two

comments about male officers, and I wondered why they were about males specifically.

**Prof. Linda Duxbury:** When we did the report, we wanted to look at the impact of rank and the impact of gender. So there is a bunch of stuff on females in there. But the interesting thing is that we could only get a sufficient sample to look at females in the two lowest ranks of constable and corporal. There were not enough females above those ranks to give us a sufficient sample size to make sure it was statistically accurate and that we could promise confidentiality.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** That tells us something.

**Prof. Linda Duxbury:** Yes, it does, actually.

• (0950)

**Mr. David Christopherson:** The other question I wanted to ask you is this. Notwithstanding the exceptional individual beside you—

**Prof. Linda Duxbury:** There were some very senior people, but there is a shortage of women above the constable and corporal ranks. There's no doubt about that.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Let me just take that a step further. Is recruitment a problem in that area? I'll ask everybody. Are we having problems attracting people other than white men?

**Ms. Beverley A. Busson:** From my perspective—and of course I haven't done the scientific study around it—once females get to the corporal level they also start making some different choices with regard to family issues and those kinds of things, so it's a very complicated issue. I think that over the years the organization has been trying to build in more infrastructure to make it work for females, but it's still an issue—the family issue.

**Prof. Linda Duxbury:** They leave after reaching the constable and corporal levels. They're coming in but they're not staying, and it goes back to this culture of work or family.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** We'll follow up on that later. Thank you very much.

Thanks, Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Christopherson.

Mr. Wrzesnewskyj, seven minutes.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** Thank you, Chair.

Mr. Elliott, as the deputy minister to public safety minister Stockwell Day, did you advise the minister on his dealings with former Commissioner Zaccardelli and the RCMP?

**The Chair:** It's not proper to ask a question about any confidential advice given to a minister.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** I'm not asking for the actual advice.

**The Chair:** Mr. Elliott knows that.

**Commr William Elliott:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I should clarify. I hate to be bureaucratic on you, but I was in fact the associate deputy minister, not the deputy minister. And I did deal with former Commissioner Zaccardelli, including in the context of his dealings with the minister.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** Thank you.

In the July 9 issue of the *Globe and Mail*, Mr. Day is quoted as saying, in terms of his relationship with you:

There were a number of times...where he would be the first to say, when it came to the terms of the RCMP, "No, a minister cannot go there, a minister cannot say this, a minister...cannot tread on this particular ground because of the independence of the RCMP."

It almost sounds as if you really had your hands full.

We also know that the minister likes sending out communiqués. I saw a communiqué in which he referenced a cheesecake that he enjoyed in Newfoundland. It almost sounds as if he'd like to be the commissioner.

How often did you have to stop the minister from politically interfering in the operation? I don't want to know the details, as was pointed out by the chair, but I'd like to know how often. It sounds as if you've had to take on that role over and over.

**Commr William Elliott:** I will say the following. Mr. Day is certainly very respectful of the independent role of the police. In very many cases it is quite clear where that role begins and ends, and in other cases it is less clear. I am not in a position to talk about the specifics of situations or the number of situations in which those issues arose, but I would say that Mr. Day and the other ministers I have dealt with in the past, of various governments, in the role of Solicitor General or Minister of Public Safety, were very respectful of the independent role of the force.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** You were also an adviser to Prime Minister Harper and the PCO on security issues. Did you, at times, discuss the issues of the difficulties under Commissioner Zaccardelli or the difficulties of the culture? Once again, we don't want details. But were there discussions with the Prime Minister about the difficulties in the RCMP?

**Commr William Elliott:** Certainly there were discussions about issues relating to the RCMP while I was national security adviser both to Prime Minister Martin and then subsequently to Prime Minister Harper. The O'Connor inquiry was going on. I don't recall the matters that the committee is seized with today being the subject of discussions.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** In your previous roles, your instincts have been...and your job entailed protecting the minister or ministers and the Prime Minister. These days it's quite different; it's to protect the RCMP from interference by the minister, Stockwell Day. In fact, as I said, in his quote he has a tendency to overstep his bounds. You were a key adviser to the Prime Minister. Are you up to the role now, instead of protecting the minister and the Prime Minister, to protect the RCMP from their interference?

• (0955)

**Commr William Elliott:** I'm reminded of an interesting exchange I had with a former minister of the Crown in Mr. Chrétien's government, in which I indicated that my role was not to protect the minister but to protect the Canadian public. I think my job as a

bureaucrat is to provide frank advice to the ministers and the government that I serve, and I try to do that to the best of my ability.

Am I up to the task of being commissioner? Well, I guess I would respond in two ways. First of all, I would echo Mr. Christopherson's comment, that time will tell. It is certainly a very, very daunting and challenging task. All I can say is that I will do my best.

**The Chair:** On a point of order, Mr. Fitzpatrick.

**Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick (Prince Albert, CPC):** I simply want the record to be clear on this point.

I heard the evidence given here today in which it was said that Mr. Day was very respectful of the independence of the RCMP. The whole premise of this continued line of questioning is that there is some sort of evidence here that would indicate otherwise.

**The Chair:** That is not a point of order. Please, let's move on.

**Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick:** Well, there has to be some evidence or some facts behind the line of questioning.

**The Chair:** Mr. Wrzesnewskyj, you have the floor.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** You just talked about providing frank advice to the former Prime Minister. One of Mr. Harper's first acts after being sworn in was a pretty big photo op with Mr. Zaccardelli in front of the RCMP headquarters. That's a very powerful subliminal message, especially when put into the context of the events just prior to that.

Did you provide frank advice on that issue?

**Commr William Elliott:** Mr. Chairman, I don't think it's appropriate for me to indicate on what matters I did or did not provide advice to the Prime Minister.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** Since you've become the commissioner, how often are you presently in direct contact with the minister, Stockwell Day?

**Commr William Elliott:** I was with the minister when he made the announcement on behalf of the Prime Minister. Since the day the announcement was made, I've spoken with the minister by phone once and I saw him in person twice.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** Well, the lines of communication appear to be quite good. What contact have you had with the Prime Minister or the Prime Minister's Office?

**Commr William Elliott:** Actually...I'm sorry; you remind me I saw the minister one additional time. He and I met with the Prime Minister. That's the only dealing I've had with the Prime Minister; it was in the week intervening between the announcement being made public and my assuming office on July 16.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Wrzesnewskyj.

Mr. Williams is next, for seven minutes.

**Mr. John Williams:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I hope we can turn and look forward, rather than looking back and looking under every rug and corner to see if we can find something that can tarnish somebody's reputation.

Anyway, first of all, former Commissioner Busson, again, my congratulations for the job you did, which was a phenomenal job under the most difficult circumstances. It's very much appreciated by Parliament and indeed by all Canadians. As you go into retirement, go in with your head high, knowing you did a fabulous job.

Mr. Elliott, you're now in the hot seat. It was mentioned earlier in relation to the CFO, Mr. Gauvin, that it would take a couple of years of dismissal processes before we could get him out the door. We had that with Mr. Crupi and we had it with Mr. Ewanovich and others. Here are people who haven't lived up to the job—in fact, with Mr. Crupi, there may have to be some serious allegations of a criminal nature or whatever—and they couldn't get them fired.

Are you going to do something about that, so that people who have crossed the line in the RCMP, people who need to be fired, are going to get fired? Do you think it's appropriate that it takes two or three years to fire somebody if they obviously deserve to be turfed?

• (1000)

**Commr William Elliott:** I think we should have a regime in which people who take actions—or fail to take actions—that justify dismissal should be able to be dismissed expeditiously.

**Mr. John Williams:** Then we have the other side of the coin. We have Denise Revine, who was summarily terminated in a different fashion, but terminated nonetheless. She was a whistle-blower.

How are you going to be able to differentiate between the people? Somebody says turf them out the door, but they're the good guys and they should be sticking around. How are you going to ensure a timely process to protect the innocent, punish the deserving, and go forward? Are you contemplating any new processes—task forces, committees, whatever?

**Commr William Elliott:** My background includes the beginning of my professional career as a defence counsel. Certainly everyone is entitled to due process. I'm not suggesting that “expeditious” means you shouldn't have due process. People need to be able to provide fair answer and defence.

The government has taken a number of steps to provide a mechanism, external to government departments and agencies, that will protect whistle-blowers and people who come forth with information. One of the things the task force has been asked to do is to look at the discipline regime. I am certainly interested in improvements being identified and implemented.

**Mr. John Williams:** Okay.

Ms. Duxbury indicated that there are some serious problems within the RCMP with morale and with women who tend to leave because the job is more important than family. And for women, of course, family should be—and in 99% of the cases it is—their number one priority. If they have to choose between the force and the family, Ms. Duxbury is pointing out—

**Prof. Linda Duxbury:** I didn't say that. I didn't say that for women family should be their number one priority. I think that family should be—

**Mr. John Williams:** No, I didn't say that you said it. I said that most women consider family to be their number one situation, and if they have to choose—

**Prof. Linda Duxbury:** No data supports that, actually. Family is number one for both men and women, and work-life balance is important for both men and women.

**Mr. John Williams:** I didn't exclude men. I just said that women are making the choice, as you said, to leave the force rather than stay with the career. These are the types of morale issues that need to be addressed.

So it's not just the upper echelon that you have to deal with, Mr. Elliott. You have to deal with the whole structure, all the way right down to corporal and constable, to ensure that you have an organization that feels part of an organization of integrity. Do you have any plans to do that at this point in time?

**Commr William Elliott:** That's a very broad question.

**Mr. John Williams:** You do intend to address the issue.

**Commr William Elliott:** The issue of ethics is certainly very much front and centre. I think you heard from Assistant Commissioner Conlin yesterday that we do provide training, both to cadets and entry officers, on ethics. I think we need to reinforce the ethics and values of the organization. In fact, I've just signed off a communication in relation to that.

I said earlier, in response to a question, that we needed to have processes and mechanisms in place that support the type of environment that we want the RCMP to be. I don't have specific structures to propose at the moment, but I certainly think that we need to find ways to reinforce the values and ethics and positive culture that are necessary for everybody to feel that they can have a productive career, from constables to the most senior ranks.

**Mr. John Williams:** You're going to be changing the ethics or the core values.... How to describe it? You're going to try to bring the RCMP up to an effective force where people have credibility and faith in their own organization, as opposed to what has happened in the past. That's why you have been appointed—to bring a new culture to the RCMP. Do you have any vision of what success is or what you're trying to achieve in the RCMP?

• (1005)

**Commr William Elliott:** I have a couple of comments.

First of all, we're not starting from ground zero. We have a very well articulated set of values. They are broadly recognized. Certainly one of the things I described from meeting with some of the women and men across the country was my sense, on their part, of hurt. I think that is actually a positive reflection of the fact that the men and women of the RCMP, almost without exception, actually believe in the values and are very disappointed and hurt when people fail to live up to them. As I indicated with respect to the survey results that we have received, there is a positive trend, and certainly senior leaders in the organization have made concerted efforts to improve the morale. And actually—

**Mr. John Williams:** But do you have a vision of what success actually is?

**Commr William Elliott:** I guess success with respect to morale is that people feel that they are operating in an organization that respects them, that provides them with the scope for them to carry out their responsibilities, that supports them with training, that has appropriate mechanisms for them to come forward, without fear of suffering negative consequences, with information with respect to where individuals or the organization fail to live up to the values. Certainly, work like our ongoing work to survey the employees will give us some measurement with respect to how successful we are at achieving that objective.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

That concludes round one. We're going to start round two.

Before we go to round two, I have a question for Mr. Elliott, and it's a process-driven question.

I believe that at the end of the day we want a performance-driven accountability regime of the RCMP. We heard yesterday from the ethics adviser, the public complaints commissioner, and the other commissioner, and it seems to me that the checks and balances are—and I think most people agree with me—woefully inadequate and probably the governance structure has to be totally redone, although you did clarify, and you're quite correct, that the values are there and a lot of good work has been done. Going forward—and Mr. Lake asked you the question about your idea—you indicated that you wouldn't be making any changes until the task force reports, and that's very understandable. But on that process I have questions on basically three areas.

First, is the senior echelon of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police involved in the task force?

Second, you mentioned earlier talking to the public. I think that's a very important issue. This task force is behind closed doors. We don't know who they're talking to and what they're doing, but I believe there has to be a dialogue with the public, and especially the members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The third one is perhaps much more complex—and it may be an unfair question because you've only been in the job for a couple of months—but at the end of the day, this is a very tough issue regarding the secrecy of law enforcement. We do not want politics driving the law enforcement agency of the country, but there has to be some tie-in with the Canadian people, and the best way is Parliament. Do you see any tie-in with Parliament, similar to what is done with CSIS, which you would be very familiar with from a previous life?

**Commr William Elliott:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, maybe I could clarify one of the things I said, which you just referred to. I indicated, or meant to indicate, that I didn't see any major structural change being introduced prior to the report of the task force, but that's not to say that we are standing still or can stand still. As I said, I've already made some changes with respect to the senior executive committee and I anticipate more changes will occur. I mentioned specifically, as an example of that, the need for us to find and staff a permanent chief financial officer.

The senior executive of the force is very much engaged with the task force. As I indicated in my opening remarks, we have struck a

steering committee to carry out work in relation to the eight areas the task force is mandated to examine, and that steering committee includes three deputy commissioners. Deputy Commissioner Sweeney is our lead in that regard. We also have Chief Superintendent Graham Muir, who is our policy and strategic planning executive. He's working virtually full time on the task force. And we're also regularly engaged, as the senior executive committee—the committee that I chair—with all of the deputy commissioners as members. And there are a number of other folks: the head of human resources, our chief legal counsel, and the executive committee of the SRR program.

I agree that we need to have dialogue both within the force and with Canadians. I also mentioned that Mr. Brown has invited, on behalf of the task force, all of the members and employees of the RCMP and in fact our veterans to communicate directly with the task force. I've also stressed the need for us to have discussions internally.

There are a number of formal mechanisms in place to engage Canadians more broadly. I am meeting in the next few weeks with the commissioner's advisory council on aboriginal issues. We also have an advisory council on visible minority issues. We have mechanisms to engage our contract partners.

With respect to the secrecy of law enforcement, certainly there is a balance to be struck. On the one hand, there is obviously a need that some things not be completely open when you're conducting a criminal investigation. For example, you don't necessarily want to tell the people you are investigating that you are investigating them, or to expose to them or to others the details of your investigation or investigative techniques.

There is certainly a requirement for independent oversight of the police and the RCMP. We have mechanisms in place. I think you've heard from Mr. Kennedy. I certainly would not argue that the mechanisms in place are adequate. We're engaged in some interesting work in that regard. We're participating in a pilot project in British Columbia, where we have Mr. Kennedy's folks involved or informed about investigations right from the get-go with respect to allegations of inappropriate behaviour on behalf of members of the RCMP.

Again, I think there were shortcomings demonstrated in Mr. Justice O'Connor's report in relation to the Arar affair. There is certainly need for improvement with respect to those mechanisms.

I don't know offhand, frankly, whether there should be some specific special parliamentary committee or process set up to deal with policing issues.

• (1010)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Mr. McGuinty, you have four minutes.

**Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.):** Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Elliott, I'd like to come to you with three different succinct questions. I notice from your background that your career is primarily that of a lawyer. You are a former general counsel of line departments in the federal government, I understand. So I want to ask you a question more in my own capacity as a lawyer and your capacity as a lawyer, as graduates of the same law school.

In the report that was written by Mr. Brown in two months, which was the extensive timeline given to him by the minister—two months to investigate this affair—the elephant in the room in this report is the fact that he is calling for the OPP to take a serious, serious look at what took place between the Ottawa Police Service... in its investigation of the RCMP.

First of all, can you tell us if there an OPP investigation under way today?

**Commr William Elliott:** My understanding is yes.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Have you been consulted about that investigation?

**Commr William Elliott:** I have not.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Can you tell us whether that investigation is taking place with the assistance of RCMP officers of any rank, any station? Are any of them involved directly in the investigation, as they were with the Ottawa Police Service?

**Commr William Elliott:** I do not believe so, although certainly members of the RCMP and employees of the RCMP, I would anticipate, will be and are being interviewed by the OPP. In fact, I recently sent out a piece of correspondence encouraging members and employees to cooperate with the OPP in the investigation.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Are you satisfied, sir, that this report actually and seriously gets to the bottom of what took place?

•(1015)

**Commr William Elliott:** I'm not really sure how to respond to that question.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** You've read the report.

**Commr William Elliott:** I've read the report. I read the Auditor General's report.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** So have I, and I want to put this to you now, because we're really short on time. You've been there only for a short period of time, and I respect that. I have my own serious concerns about the task force mandate and its own terms of reference. Are you satisfied with what's taken place here in 60 days, with interviews, that the people of Canada really know what's happened here?

**Commr William Elliott:** I believe Mr. Brown indicated that he felt he got all of the information he required to come to his conclusions.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** He may have indicated that. How do you feel?

**Commr William Elliott:** I don't have any basis to take issue with Mr. Brown's conclusions.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Okay. Can I go to the question, then, of rebuilding the trust— page 47, chapter 8 of the report? It builds on the remarks made by the chair.

I have to tell you that I'm not comforted at all by your comments about consultation or engagement. I think the report written by Mr. Brown is rife with references to a culture of fear, a culture of authority, authoritarianism, a culture of risk—if one were to raise questions—a culture of taking orders, and that may be very well the culture of a paramilitary organization like the RCMP. I've never worked in the RCMP. I don't know that for sure, but I'm very worried

by the fact that in the report Mr. Brown is now suggesting that even though the report that he writes is rife with references to secrecy and lack of transparency, he says the task force that is supposed apparently to oversee new governance and cultural change in the organization will be secret itself. In fact, all the serious deliberations are supposed to take place behind the scenes. You say that a letter has been electronically distributed to, I assume, 26,000 members of the RCMP, but I don't think anybody believes that is meaningful consultation or engagement.

I think most people will be very fearful about writing a letter in to you or to anybody else on the task force. Are you confident that this process, this task force of now until December 15—about three months—is being rushed by the government? Do we really know for sure? Are you confident that this is going to lead to blowing this wide open so the people inside the RCMP who are desperate to have their say are going to be able to say it?

**Commr William Elliott:** There are a number of mechanisms, a number of venues open to individuals in the RCMP to make their views known. As I said, they can communicate electronically with the task force directly without any involvement of anyone else in the organization. We have an ethics adviser. People can go to their supervisors. Employees have union representatives. Members have access to the SRRs. As we have seen, there is this committee. I have certainly been very consistent in all of my communications, direct and electronically, with individuals, encouraging them to make their views known to me, encouraging them to make their views known to their commanding officers, encouraging them to speak directly to the task force.

Certainly on the feedback that I have received from people, they have not been shy about making their views known to me, including being very critical of some things that have gone on in the past.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Elliott.

Mr. Fitzpatrick, four minutes.

**Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick:** I'd like to pick up on Mr. McGuinty's point as well. We're involved in a process here, a task force that's going to deal with culture and governance and so on. I'm going to observe something I see in Parliament quite often: there are a lot of members of Parliament who believe that as soon as they identify a problem, we can resolve the problem by ordering a result—by passing some legislation, and so on—and that magically the problem will go away.

It doesn't work that way, I don't think. There's too much involved in issues and problems just to order or command that they disappear.

The concern I have is that in modern organizations that are successful, high-quality organizations.... It seems to me the front-line people are very much involved and engaged in those organizations. They're the benchmark that people should be looking at for strong organizations. You build a team and you get their involvement in it.

I think it's crucial that when the task force recommends changes and we get involved in implementing changes, the thousands of RCMP members across the country be engaged in those changes and be onside and supportive of those ideas and understand what we're trying to do. If they aren't, I think we may end up not getting the results we want.

That's just an observation that I would pass on.

I also think it's very important.... There's a lot of fear in the RCMP organization, among the members. A lot of that fear is unnecessary fear, and I think it's incumbent upon the RCMP to eliminate a lot of that fear from their organization.

I want to also pass on to the former commissioner that I've talked to a lot of front-line police officers back in Saskatchewan, and they had a lot of trust and confidence in your leadership.

Now I want to deal with an issue. When I talk to RCMP members—this goes on over a lot of years, and it certainly didn't apply to the past commissioner, but it has applied to other commissioners and senior leadership people—they don't have trust in the leadership of the RCMP at that level. They say things such as Ms. Duxbury has said: that there's too much politics involved at the senior level of the RCMP; that it's not about law enforcement, and police work, and so on, but is about a whole range of other things. A lot of members aren't confident that rising in the RCMP is really based on merit or real performance on the job; it's other matters.

Could you perhaps enlighten us as to what is meant when members say there's too much politics in the senior level of the RCMP? What do they mean by that?

I'm addressing it to—

• (1020)

**Prof. Linda Duxbury:** I'm sorry. I was just listening, saying, “Yes, yes, I agree.”

I think from my interviews—300 interviews of an hour or an hour and a half, or two hours, some of them—a lot of people thought that people were agreeing with leaders so that they would be perceived positively, when they didn't agree with what was going on. The idea of “politics” is.... The culture of the RCMP was one where we shot the messenger. So quite frankly, the politics meant that if you thought you were going to be shot, you ended up not saying anything.

The members at large, the rank and file of the RCMP, saw that as sucking up, being political—their language was sometimes much more colourful than that—and thought such people were doing things because they were protecting their own job, as opposed to protecting their members. That was not the case right across the board, but they definitely perceived that in the senior ranks.

**The Chair:** Mr. Fitzpatrick is out of time.

If the former commissioner or Commissioner Elliott want to make a comment on either of those issues, I invite you to do so.

**Commr William Elliott:** Very briefly, Mr. Chairman, as I have mentioned a few times, we need to have the mechanisms and practice in place where we do what we can to ensure that we have an environment where people feel at liberty to come forward and discuss their concerns, to make allegations or bring forward information.

With respect to the performance of people in the RCMP, including at the most senior ranks, I certainly think we have to hold them to account not only for what they do, but how they do it. I will certainly be looking at building those kinds of expectations into the

performance records of my direct reports and those who report to them and throughout the organization.

I talked about the fact that we have done quite a lot of work over the last few years to survey people. I think we should look at other means to get feedback from people. When we're looking at the assessment of leaders, for example, I and other organizations have seen the utility of feedback on a 360-degree basis, where you solicit feedback from superiors, peers, and people in lower ranks of the organization. I think there may be other tools that we can look at where we can solicit views of employees on issues in addition to a survey that takes place every year or two.

• (1025)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

[Translation]

Mr. Lussier, you have four minutes.

**Mr. Marcel Lussier (Brossard—La Prairie, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Elliott, you have undertaken the reform of the RCMP and you mentioned in your document that it was your intention to improve its transparency. When you hide behind confidential recommendations or even national security, people wonder about this fine transparency in the RCMP.

As to the fraud in the RCMP's pension and insurance plan, was Mr. Brown's inquiry conducted with complete impartiality and independence? Are you satisfied with Mr. Brown's recommendations?

[English]

**Commr William Elliott:** First of all, with respect to the view of Canadians, I again cite our survey results that indicate, in 2007, 87% agreed with the statement that the RCMP is an organization with integrity and honesty. So I do not accept the premise that Canadians believe, by and large, that the RCMP is an organization that differs from that.

With respect to Mr. Brown's report, as I indicated in the answer to a question posed by Mr. McGuinty, I accept the report and recommendations of Mr. Brown, as I believe my predecessor, Commissioner Busson, did on behalf of the organization.

[Translation]

**Mr. Marcel Lussier:** Are there still matters to look into? Will RCMP investigators continue to dig into the fraud?

[English]

**Commr William Elliott:** The only ongoing investigation, to my knowledge, is the investigation being conducted by the Ontario Provincial Police.

[Translation]

**Mr. Marcel Lussier:** So no officer or investigator is looking into the matter.

Turning to the Brown Report, was Mr. Brown involved in the police groups that included officers from the Ottawa Police Service and the RCMP? In previous investigations, was Mr. Brown involved in joint groups that included the Ontario Provincial Police, the Ottawa Police Service and the RCMP?

[English]

**Commr William Elliott:** To my knowledge, no. With respect to the pension and insurance matters, to my knowledge, Mr. Brown's involvement began when the government appointed him as an independent investigator. I'm not sure I completely understand the question. I suspect that in his capacity with the Ontario Securities Commission, Mr. Brown may have had some dealings with the RCMP and other police services with respect to investigations.

[Translation]

**Mr. Marcel Lussier:** Could we be talking about financial investigations?

**Commr William Elliott:** Perhaps.

**Mr. Marcel Lussier:** Let me come back to one point. Earlier, you said that you wanted to have direct contact with your officers and your employees in your office. But Ms. Ebbs, who often deals with grievances in her role with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police External Review Committee, told us yesterday that not all grievances are brought to her attention. According to what we gathered yesterday, the commissioner has the power to screen those grievances. Some employee grievances do not reach the Royal Canadian Mounted Police External Review Committee because the commissioner has the power to screen them.

Are you aware of that?

• (1030)

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. Elliott.

**Commr William Elliott:** I believe that the mandate of the External Review Committee has limitations with respect to the types of issues they can deal with. I think for a number of grievances I am, as commissioner, the final-level decision-maker.

I guess the other thing I would say is that we have an organization of 26,000 people, and although I'm encouraging people to communicate with me directly, I obviously can't by myself deal with all allegations or situations of impropriety. We need to have the mechanisms in place, which include the grievance processes and the roles for the ERC and Mr. Kennedy's public complaints commission, to deal with issues as well, in addition to the other officers to whom I have referred earlier.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Lussier.

[English]

Mr. Sweet, for four minutes.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have a comment upfront about some of the conversation and questions that have been going on regarding the Brown report.

I think it's important to note on the record that Mr. Brown drew from multiple investigations, including the work of this committee, and in nine weeks brought together reams and reams of information. I think 35,000 documents and thousands and thousands of e-mails have already been investigated and have culminated into a report. So although the figure of nine weeks has been used quite a bit, it's been years of investigation at different levels.

Mr. Elliott, I'm glad to hear about the increasing numbers on trust and also your realization that there's still a substantial way to go. I'm also very happy to hear about a true, confidential, 360° review. You mentioned that this worked in other organizations you've been with. I hope it's something that's implemented. It's something that will bring a lot more trust, and people will be more open.

In that regard, yesterday we had the chairman of the Commission for Public Complaints Against the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, as well as the chairman for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police External Review Committee, as well as Assistant Commissioner Conlin. The questions were around exactly what kinds of initiatives were being taken now to move towards providing a place for members like Denise Revine, Staff Sergeant Lewis, or Chief Superintendent Macaulay, so that when have a concern, they can understand that they have protected, unfettered access to a place where they can get resolution easily and fairly when the mission and vision values of the RCMP have been corrupted by another member. In every case when we were asking those questions, it seemed that there was no place to go. Assistant Commissioner Conlin mentioned that they could certainly go to her, but she had no authority to actually make changes.

My question to the assistant commissioner, and it would be the same to you, is this. This task force is working. I understand that you want to wait for the results of that and I understand you've only been in the position for a couple of months as well. However, as a leader now, are you formulating some ideas about some recommendations that you're going to make to the task force to make sure no member will have any fear in the future of coming forward with a complaint that goes to the core of the mission and vision values of the RCMP?

**Commr William Elliott:** I certainly think we need to have mechanisms, processes, and practices in place for people to come forward. I think those need to be multi-layered. I think you need to start with internal mechanisms. It would be ideal if there was an ability for issues to be identified and resolved without going to extraordinary measures. Perhaps the word "extraordinary" isn't the most apt.

For example, we've touched on grievance procedures. To me, most grievances are an indication of a failure on behalf of the organization to resolve issues. Be that as it may, some issues don't get resolved and you need to have internal mechanisms like the grievance process. There is certainly a role for supervisors, CEOs, and executives, but I think we also need to look at the ability of people to go outside the organization.

One of the options that I think should be looked at is the potential for an ombudsman with more defined authorities than we currently have for the ethics adviser. Certainly one of the things the task force is looking at is the notion of a police board. I know that in the exchange yesterday, there was an indication that in other jurisdictions, including Quebec and British Columbia, there are mechanisms outside police forces for redress.

I certainly think the role of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner can also play an important role with respect to the RCMP, which of course is covered by the legislation and the mandate of the commissioner.



•(1035)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Sweet.

Mr. Christopherson, for four minutes.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Thank you very much, Chair.

Again, to Commissioner Elliott, along the same vein as Mr. Sweet's question, I'd like to hear a little more about how you're going to try to separate those who are categorized as being disgruntled employees from those who have a legitimate complaint.

It's a very stark question. I've asked it in that way because let's not forget it wasn't that many months ago when, after hearing from senior police officers before we called anybody in or before we even agreed, we heard the world was wonderful and there were no problems. If there were problems, they were attributed to other things, but it was not because there were real problems.

The opposition all voted, in a formal vote against the government, to have Frizzell, Macaulay, Revine, and Lewis come to speak. Remember that when it happened, at that time, they were troublemakers. They were disgruntled employees. It's in Hansard. I won't name names, but government members said they weren't going to let them come here and be given a platform to launch against senior officers just because they were disgruntled employees. We brought them here and started to hear from them. It's when this started to unravel.

It wasn't that long ago that the names—and I'm going to say them again—Frizzell, Macaulay, Revine, and Lewis, who are now going to be legendary heroes in the RCMP, were troublemakers. It was a few months ago.

I'd like to know what you're going to do. I know you don't have the steps, but what's your vision of how you're going to be able to separate them? There are disgruntled workers and employees, and then there are legitimate people who are concerned about the organization. How are you going to do it?

I have one last thing, because I won't get another question.

We heard Chair Kennedy from the Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP, Chair Ebbs from the External Review Committee, and former Assistant Commissioner John Spice, the former ethics adviser, make a recommendation around an ombudsperson. I'd like to know what level of support you have for the recommendations they made.

I think you're going to find that our report is going to contain a lot of support for what they've suggested on both legislative changes and the creation of the ombudsperson. I'd like a sense of where you are on those and an early indication of how much support you're prepared to give their recommendations.

**Commr William Elliott:** Thank you. I have several things to say in response.

There are various models out there, but I think we need to have mechanisms and processes in place so people can come forward and bring information or make allegations without fear of retribution. We need to be able to have an independent examination of that information and allegations. There are several ways that can be done.

I'm not yet in a position where I have a specific recommendation on what the best mechanism might be for the RCMP. I think you need to tailor your mechanism to some extent to reflect the reality of the organization you are dealing with.

The other comment I would make is this. I'm not suggesting this is a solution in and of itself, and I would be interested in the view of Ms. Duxbury, but in my view, leadership matters. It matters not only to the individuals you have named but to the entire organization that Commissioner Busson recognized them for doing what it did. I and others are saying to people that if there are issues, they should bring them forward. They will be treated with respect, and the situations will be appropriately investigated and dealt with.

My saying that is not enough. We need to have the mechanisms and processes in place to do that. I look forward to the recommendations of this committee and the task force to help us put those mechanisms in place. Some of them will be within the purview of the RCMP to do, and some of them, I anticipate, will be external to us and may require legislation.

•(1040)

**Mr. David Christopherson:** You might just want to hold off on the "leadership matters" phrases for the next five weeks.

Thanks.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Christopherson.

Thank you, Commissioner Elliott.

Mr. McGuinty, you have four minutes.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Elliott, I'd like to come back to a line of questioning that you were exposed to a few minutes ago. It has to do with your relationship with the minister.

Does the minister regularly sending e-mail to the staff of your organization?

**Commr William Elliott:** The minister, as I understand it, periodically sends e-mail to employees in all of the agencies within his portfolio.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Are you in a position to table that e-mail with this committee?

**Commr William Elliott:** I expect I could do that. The only e-mail within my direct control, if I can use those words, is e-mail that has gone to members and employees of the RCMP. I know that the minister has sent e-mail to others. I'm aware of at least two or three occasions where e-mail went to the RCMP, and I'd be happy to table that.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Would you have received copies of any recent e-mail since your appointment?

**Commr William Elliott:** There has been no such e-mail since my appointment. I believe the last one was after the government announced my appointment but before its effective date.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Is it true that in that e-mail you are referred to as Bill by the minister—sort of like Steve?

**Commr William Elliott:** I may well be referred to as Bill by the minister, because the minister calls me Bill, as do all of my friends, relations, and co-workers.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Do you report directly to the minister?

**Commr William Elliott:** I'm independent of the minister. I report to Parliament through the minister.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Mr. Commissioner, in your almost 20 years of public service as a senior public servant, have you ever seen a minister of the Crown communicate this way with a special operating agency, a crown corporation, or even their own employees in a line department? Are you a little uncomfortable with being referred to as Bill in these communications? Don't you think you should be referred to as Commissioner Elliott?

**Commr William Elliott:** I'm not uncomfortable with being referred to as Bill. I might point out that Prime Minister Martin, Prime Minister Harper, and many other ministers with whom I served in a number of successive governments called me Bill. That is my name. And I'm not uncomfortable with Minister Day's direct communications with employees.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Did Prime Minister Harper or Prime Minister Martin ever send out e-mails to 26,000 RCMP staff referring to you in a cozy term like Bill?

**Commr William Elliott:** I'm not sure I can agree that calling someone by name is a cozy term, but to my knowledge, and in answer to your question, the individuals you indicated, other than Minister Day, have not sent out such e-mails.

[Translation]

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Commissioner, you were not able to answer the questions from my colleagues from the Bloc Québécois in French. Are you bilingual?

**Commr William Elliott:** I am not perfectly bilingual, but I have achieved a certain level of ability in French.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Excellent. I was just checking because you did not answer the questions in French.

**Commr William Elliott:** Let me clarify: my first language is English and when I want to be very precise, that is the language I prefer to use. I work in both languages, I speak to employees and colleagues in both languages.

[English]

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Have you had any discussion in the last week with the minister, his office, or the PMO in anticipation and preparation for your appearance here today?

**Commr William Elliott:** No.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Going back to this question of consultation—I want to go back to the question I left you with after the last round—do you seriously believe that what you're proposing or what the task force is proposing to do is really going to help shift the culture inside the RCMP by having hidden deliberations, outside the eyes of the staff of the RCMP and not open to the Canadian public? Is this really the kind of transparency that Mr. Brown is calling for and that I think everybody in this room is calling for?

•(1045)

**Commr William Elliott:** First of all, I'd like to clarify one thing. The answer I gave a moment ago was not completely accurate. I did

meet with Mr. Day this week; we did discuss the fact that I would be appearing. But we did not have discussions about what it is I would be testifying on.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Not about your testimony in any way? You did not talk to the minister about your testimony in any way for today?

**The Chair:** That's it, Mr. McGuinty.

Do you have any parting comments, Mr. Elliott?

**Mr. David Christopherson:** On a point of order, on the need for full disclosure, I didn't realize this was an issue at the time, but as the Solicitor General of Ontario I did refer to former commissioner Thomas O'Grady as Tom. I'm sorry that I got too cozy. Now that I know it's a big problem, I want to throw that out.

**The Chair:** We will reprimand you in due course.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Okay. I'll feel better then.

**Mr. Mike Lake:** I'm a little disappointed about the line of questioning—

**The Chair:** Just before you start, Mr. Lake, if I may, I want to clarify the undertaking to table e-mails. That will be done within two weeks, Mr. Elliott?

**Commr William Elliott:** I'd be happy to do that, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chair:** Mr. Lake, you have four minutes.

**Mr. Mike Lake:** I want to walk through this in terms of what happened. I want to be comfortable that if this were to happen again, things would be handled differently.

Taking a look at the order of things, we have Ms. Revine fulfilling her responsibilities. She is charged with this A-base review, and in the course of her work she finds a problem. She takes it to her direct supervisor, Chief Superintendent Macaulay. He advises the ethics commissioner. It seems that these are reasonable things to do. The staff relations representative, Staff Sergeant Lewis, gets involved and informs the commissioner that there's a problem. It seems that internally they're doing all of the things they should have done.

Nothing happens, so finally they go to what they see as their last resort. In February 2004, Staff Sergeant Lewis actually writes a letter to the President of the Treasury Board, the minister responsible for the RCMP—at the time, it would have been Anne McLellan—and the Auditor General with respect to the pension plan matters. In the letter he states that Commissioner Zaccardelli had failed “to meet his obligations under the RCMP Act and as our leader, in relation to serious accusations of wrongdoing by senior managers...”. He has basically gone everywhere he can go and done everything internal that he can do—they all have—and nothing happens. They finally go to the minister. It seems that the minister is as high as it gets, the absolute last resort.

I know there are other mechanisms in place now, but going back, what more could they have done? If you were the commissioner at the time, what would you expect the minister to do in that situation?

**Commr William Elliott:** I'm not sure I can answer that question.

**Mr. Mike Lake:** What would you expect your minister to do now? You're in the position of commissioner now. Would you expect that a minister would take action at that point? The commissioner is not acting, and their whole frustration centres on the fact that the commissioner is doing nothing. So the minister's action at the time was to have a meeting with the commissioner. The commissioner says it's all okay, and the minister just goes on her way, trusting that everything's going to be fine. But the whole problem centred around the commissioner at the time.

What more were they to do?

**Commr William Elliott:** As I said, I don't have an answer with respect to what more they could do. With respect to the minister, I guess the only comment I would make is that the RCMP Act provides that the minister can give direction to the commissioner.

**Mr. Mike Lake:** Okay.

I want to talk a little further to what Mr. Sweet was saying and ask the question in terms of the situation and, if it were to happen today, what would happen differently. Again, maybe speak a little further to the structural mechanisms that would ensure that they would get a fair hearing now. Outside of a commissioner who happens to be a good listener, what assurance do they have that they're going to get a hearing and their careers aren't going to be ended now, going forward, if this were to happen today?

• (1050)

**Commr William Elliott:** We have legislation passed by the Government of Canada to provide protection to those who come forward with information or allegations of impropriety. We have the creation of the Office of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner. Internal to the RCMP, there is what I guess I would describe as informal reinvigoration of the role of the ethics adviser, but I think up to this point nothing further formally has been put in place. I think that is a shortcoming and I think that it should be addressed. One of the things we are examining in the course of our work in support of the task force is what those mechanisms might be.

**Mr. Mike Lake:** I know my colleague Mr. Sweet has a question that I think is important, so I'm going to pass it on to him.

**Mr. David Sweet:** In Ms. Duxbury's study, on page 6, under "Objective Three: Recruitment and Retention", there's a really glaring concern. I would like to ask you about whether you're specifically trying to handle this for the future. It states:

Two thirds of this sample (90% of those in the Sergeant/Staff Sergeant and Inspector and above groups) say they plan on leaving the RCMP in the next several years. These data suggest that the RCMP will likely have a succession planning problem in the near future.

I was just wondering if you were aware of that, that this exodus may be coming, and if you have some action that's going to be taken to make sure there's a recruitment initiative so that the ranks aren't thin.

**Commr William Elliott:** Certainly the RCMP has had a demographic challenge for a number of years, like other departments and agencies of the federal government. The intake was very limited. We have taken concrete steps to increase our recruitment. Significant investments have been made in the training academy in Regina. We

will graduate more recruits this year than we have in any of the recent previous years.

Having said that, we are having some challenges meeting our targets with respect to recruiting. We're recruiting more recruits, but we are not recruiting as many as we need, and we need to make more efforts. We are in the process of taking steps to do that and examining ways that we can do better. For example, I don't remember the exact number, but I think it's around 20 individuals whose full-time occupation is to do proactive recruiting, and that is certainly paying some successes.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Elliott.

That concludes, colleagues, round two.

I have a question for Ms. Duxbury.

I understand one of your emphases is on change management. You've heard the testimony today; obviously you're following this issue. In your opinion, what is required here?

**Prof. Linda Duxbury:** I teach the PhD class in managing change. I teach the MBA class. I think that if you looked at my report, the RCMP is definitely not change ready. The biggest issue, of course, is a lack of trust and a real doubt that the RCMP is actually going to stick to it this time.

The RCMP, like a lot of public servants, like a lot of other people, are change weary. They've had a lot of changes thrust on them in the last several decades, but very little follow-through.

My advice is, first of all, don't go in there expecting to change the world immediately. You have to build credibility. You have to build trust. You build credibility and trust not by what you say but by what you do. I think it's very important in the next six months to actually show that things will be slightly different, that there is a respect.

In fact I think the accountability frameworks need to be changed. There has been a real recognition that changing policies is a necessary first step, as is changing structures, but it will do no good if the culture remains one of policy and not practice.

I really think we need to recognize that this is an incredibly difficult task that—I did call him Bill as well, I'm sorry to say, but I'm an academic and inappropriate anyway. I think it's very important to recognize that while dramatic action is needed, there's a real risk. I would say that right now the majority of RCMP are sitting on the fence and saying "let's see what happens, not what they say but what they do".

I emphasize that as being important.

• (1055)

**The Chair:** I want to thank you for those comments.

Monsieur Laforest.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Yves Laforest:** Thank you for giving me the floor, Mr. Chair. I will be very brief.

On a number of occasions, I have expressed the desire to have a public inquiry in order to shed light on everything that has happened in the RCMP. After hearing Ms. Duxbury's evidence today, in which she told us how difficult it is given the considerable resistance to change, and Mr. Elliott's who hides behind state secrets and national security in order to avoid answering questions, even in the Maher Arar case where we know that national security was not an issue and is a complete red herring, I want, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, to demand a public inquiry in the clearest terms so that the people of Quebec and of Canada can find out what is happening and so that real changes can be made.

Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

I'm going to invite you to make closing comments, Mr. Elliott.

That concludes the meeting, colleagues. Before we do adjourn, though, I'm going to invite Ms. Duxbury, former Commissioner Busson, and Commissioner Elliott to make any closing comments that they see appropriate.

Commissioner Elliott, I understand you do have a closing comment.

**Commr William Elliott:** Mr. Chairman, I just want to begin by saying I take exception to the honourable member's comments accusing me of hiding behind things. In my role as a public servant, I had an obligation to the governments that I served to provide frank, confidential advice. It is not appropriate for me to reveal that advice.

With respect to the specific issue about national security issues and confidentiality, I point out for the record that the Federal Court of Canada determined that a number of the things that were redacted were in fact redacted appropriately.

With respect to the issues that we came to discuss today, Mr. Chairman, I just want to reinforce that I'm very honoured to be Commissioner of the RCMP. The RCMP is made up of thousands of women and men who provide exemplary service to Canadians. There are certainly shortcomings. I would say that there are more than a few weaknesses that we have to address, but even having said that, I would say that there is far more positive than negative about the RCMP. There is far more right about the RCMP than there are areas that need improvement. The areas that need improvement are numerous and they are very significant, and I am committed to do my best to work with the organization, to work with the task force, to work with the minister, to work with the government and parliamentarians to bring those improvements that are necessary and that the RCMP requires and that Canadians also require.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Commissioner Elliott.

Do you have any closing remarks, former Commissioner Busson?

**Ms. Beverley A. Busson:** Thank you very much.

I want to thank the committee for the kind comments they made about my leadership.

And I would echo what Commissioner Elliott said. I do believe that leadership does matter. And in this organization, that change, as Mr. Lake said, will not be easy and it will not be immediate. I do believe that leadership from the top and the kinds of changes and the kinds of initiatives and the kind of trust this organization is building from the top down and from the bottom up with the people of Canada is a very important step forward. Senior management in this organization exists to support the courage and the amazing work that gets done in the field every day. And I believe that the message from the top, as Ms. Duxbury said, reinforced over and over again by actions, will again build that trust both among the membership and among the public. There is amazing work to be done every day. It is dangerous work, and the safety of the country is at stake.

I want to thank the committee. It has been a true privilege to have served for over thirty-two and a half years and a real honour to have been commissioner for the short time I was. I want to thank the committee for its support in moving the force forward.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Busson.

Ms. Duxbury, have you any final comments?

**Prof. Linda Duxbury:** Yes. I want to provide a word of caution to this committee.

Cultural change is the most difficult kind of change. The majority of cultural changes fail. We know that even if all the stars are aligned, it takes five to ten years for cultural change to occur. And not all the stars are aligned here, so I would just caution the committee that we have to give the RCMP a chance here. We can't expect miracles and overnight things to happen.

The other thing is that leadership does matter, especially with respect to cultural change, because the leader sets the culture by his or her own behaviour. The leader also has access to the resources and the levers needed for this kind of change, such as changing the accountability framework, changing reward structures, and so on.

I also want to say that leadership is not positional. To be a leader you have to have followers, and I think we have to make that distinction. There can be leaders from every level of the organization. It is going to be a significant challenge, and I wish them luck.

● (1100)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Duxbury.

Just to conclude, I want to thank you, Commissioner Elliott, for being here today. You've taken on a very difficult and challenging job. Everyone here on the committee certainly wishes you all the best. I certainly want to echo your comments about the 17,000 members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police who are serving Canadians every day and every night. The studies that we're doing really reflect on that top echelon and do not in any way reflect on the tremendous job that the members of your force are doing currently.

Again, Ms. Busson, I want to echo the comments that were made previously. You've had a stellar career with the RCMP. You have been before this committee four or five times on this particular issue, and we certainly want to thank you very much for your help and assistance.

Ms. Duxbury, again I want to thank you. Your report will be invaluable to the committee as we move forward on this particular issue.

Having said that, colleagues, I'm going to pause. I remind members that we will take a 10-minute break and then we'll come back in camera.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

- \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_
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[*Public proceedings resume*]

- (1400)

**The Chair:** At this point in time I call the meeting to order. I want to welcome everyone back to this session of today's meetings. This meeting will last one hour, colleagues, and we have one witness before us, Mr. David A. Brown.

Mr. Brown was the independent investigator appointed by the public safety minister earlier in the year to report on some of the issues surrounding the insurance and pension funds of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Mr. Brown did report to the minister on June 15. That report is public, and I believe all members have a copy. He's also been appointed to chair a task force to deal with governance structures regarding the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. That task force has been under way for about six weeks. It is served by four other members besides him, and their mandate is to report by the end of the year, by December 31.

Mr. Brown, I want to welcome you to the committee. I thank you for coming. First of all, do you have any opening comments or remarks you wish to make?

**Mr. David Brown (Independent Investigator into RCMP Pension and Insurance Matters, Office of the Independent Investigator into RCMP Pension and Insurance Matters):** No, I don't, thank you, Chair. I'm aware that many people coming before you do start with opening comments. As I thought about what I might say to you, I couldn't really think of anything you didn't already know. Rather than summarize things in my report, which would have been a waste of your time, I thought we would simply launch into it and I would be prepared to take your questions.

**The Chair:** Okay. First we're going to have one round, seven minutes each.

Mr. Wrzesnewskyj.

I should remind members, too, that there are some pictures being taken by a House of Commons photographer. He's not one of the local media, so he's certainly welcome to stay and take pictures.

Mr. Wrzesnewskyj.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Brown, for appearing, and for all of your hard and diligent work you've been conducting.

Mr. Brown, there must have been preliminary drafts of your report. Is that assumption correct?

**Mr. David Brown:** I don't think there was a preliminary draft of the entire report. We did it in pieces. As we found issues that we were comfortable with, we started the draft. Given the timeframe, if we'd waited until the end before turning out drafts, we probably wouldn't have got there. So there were various pieces done. It was pulled together and some final drafting done, but if you're asking me if there are preliminary drafts somewhere, I suspect...I don't know.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** I was going to ask if it would be possible to table those.

**Mr. David Brown:** If indeed they exist. This was all being done electronically, and as drafts were being done we were making changes, sometimes even on the screen, because we were working well into the night. I'll see what we've got.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** Sure. Perhaps we could request them should you be able to locate them. Were any of those harder hitting than—

**The Chair:** On a point of order, Mr. Williams.

**Mr. John Williams:** Mr. Brown has tabled a report. This is the official document. I'm sure there were editing and spelling mistakes that were corrected and grammatical mistakes that were corrected and things that were added in and thrown out. We don't want draft reports and interim reports and first-draft reports and so on. This is the report. This is what we have. This is the official document, and anything that preceded this is not really relevant.

**The Chair:** That's not a point of order, Mr. Williams. I don't know why he would want them, Mr. Williams, but they are documents in the public domain; they're not privileged. If they're available, as a member of Parliament he would be entitled to receive them.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** Chair, I hope that didn't eat into my time, that non-point of order.

Were any of those portions of drafts harder hitting than what appeared in the final draft?

**Mr. David Brown:** No.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** Okay.

Your report goes on at length, and a yardstick you used was whether the RCMP acted in a timely and effective manner at every instance when allegations and serious allegations came forward. These were your yardsticks. It wasn't part of your mandate to take a look at whether the minister, Minister Day, upon hearing these allegations from various sources—members of Parliament, his caucus members, whistle-blowers—a year previously... Did you take a look at whether or not he acted in a timely and correct way when he was first made aware of these allegations?

- (1405)

**Mr. David Brown:** No, that was not part of our mandate and we did not look at that.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** Okay.

In your report and during the tabling of that report, you had two months to conduct this within the limitations of the mandate and within the limitations of time. You did the best you could; however, you made a couple of very categorical statements. When asked whether or not there should be a public inquiry, you said there was "nothing new, or at least nothing new in value" that it would provide. That's actually your quote.

It's interesting, because just a couple of days prior, you referenced Mr. Gauvin and the fact that he'd abdicated his duty of comptroller-ship and holding departments to account. Just a couple of days before that, and I guess when the final versions of these were written, we found out that it was more than just not fulfilling duties; he was actually quite proactive. In the commissioner's boardroom he tried to put pressure on an officer from the ATIP section who was about to release documents, and he wanted to replace those documents with documents he'd prepared in his office. This is a deputy commissioner.

Just yesterday we heard new allegations. Potentially we'll have to hear from witnesses who will contradict the commissioner's testimony before us here, so how can you have this tremendous comfort in stating that there's nothing new and nothing new in value to be found in a public accountable process and that in fact the preferred course is a secret behind-closed-doors task force?

**Mr. David Brown:** There are several questions there. If I miss one of them, perhaps you could remind me at the end, and I'll try to circle back.

First of all, with respect to the time period, it's true that we had only nine weeks, and it was really only eight weeks of operating time, because it took us a week to get organized and up and running.

In order to accomplish the work that had to be done during that timeframe, I needed to be assured that I had the necessary resources to be able to do it. It quickly became clear that an awful lot of background material was already in existence. There had been a number of studies done previously, as you know. Your work here in this committee had been ongoing; there were witnesses who had come and testified here, so there was a great deal of information coming from those witnesses.

We were able, very quickly, to get all the information that we thought was necessary from the RCMP. It was delivered to us quickly. I was able to get a staff of people moving very quickly, within a couple of days of my being appointed. I interviewed the five largest forensic accounting groups in the country and selected one that had the resources and was able to put them on the ground here. So we had a tremendous amount of material available to us even from the start and we had the resources to be able to do it.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** Would you still stand by that statement today?

**Mr. David Brown:** Yes, I would.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** Another statement you made was that—and it's a quote, once again—there were no signs of cover-up, and that these were inadvertent and not deliberate acts.

I just referenced the situation with Mr. Gauvin. Here's a case; I don't know how else we could describe that. We also have this problematic situation of the very top officials within the RCMP

providing us with contradictory statements, diametrically opposed statements. Do you still stand by the statement that these things were inadvertent and not deliberate?

• (1410)

**Mr. David Brown:** Absolutely. I say inadvertent, and I also believe there were some mistakes in judgment and some mistakes in management.

These issues were well known throughout the RCMP. One of the big problems from the inaction by the commissioner and senior management was that people in the RCMP knew about some of these goings-on, and they knew that things weren't being done about it. This was not a secret.

What we found was that management, including the commissioner, failed to understand the seriousness of it and failed to understand the messages that were being sent to those who were aware of what was going on by their inaction. They failed to really grasp this and to do something with it.

The commissioner thought he had dealt with the issue. He removed two people from their jobs and thought that was all he had to do.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** He also punitively transferred a number of people and he—

**Mr. David Brown:** Yes, okay, and the report found that, as you know. But this was not because people were hiding things under the rug. These were all out in the open. It's just that the decisions that were being made were not appropriate in the circumstances.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Wrzesnewskyj.

Monsieur Laforest, *sept minutes*.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Yves Laforest:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon, Mr. Brown. In your report, you agree that there are significant leadership shortcomings in the RCMP's senior management, and that a kind of culture of secrecy exists. Is it not a little paradoxical, not to say untenable on your part to denounce secrecy on the one hand, and, on the other, to suggest that the solution is the creation of a working group that would operate in camera?

Do you not find it a bit of a contradiction to criticize a practice and then to correct it by operating in exactly the same way?

[*English*]

**Mr. David Brown:** First of all, given my background, I'm a strong proponent of transparency as a securities regulator. I spent seven years advocating transparency and I feel very strongly about transparency.

What I recommended in the report is that deliberations of the task force be conducted in private. And I did that for the simple reason that we're dealing here with careers. We're hoping that people who are still employed by the RCMP, committed to the RCMP, will feel comfortable coming forward and sharing with us their innermost thoughts, and that they will feel comfortable in doing that.

Having said that, what we're doing is by no means in secret. We are meeting with as many people as we can. We've met with the leadership of the SRRs; we're meeting with the entire SRR caucus; we're meeting with all of the assistant commissioners; we're meeting with the pay council; we're going out to Depot next week to meet with cadets; and we're meeting with division commanders. We're trying to get to and talk to as many people as we can. It's not secret, as you say—

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Yves Laforest:** Mr. Brown, you are telling me that the process inside the RCMP is not secret, and I accept that. But in the eyes of the public, the secrecy persists, and the public deplors that.

I have one more question. You also mentioned in your report that possibly the Ontario Provincial Police would conduct an investigation, or take a look at the Ottawa Police Service's report on what happened at the RCMP. You suggested that perhaps the investigation was not independent. What is your basis for making that statement?

[English]

**Mr. David Brown:** Again, if I may, there were two points there. One was that the public is very interested in knowing the results of what we're doing. My intention is that as a result of the work of the task force, we will do analyses of what we've seen, we'll do analyses of what we see as best practices in other police forces around the world, and those will all be made public, as will a report of our recommendations. So there will be that public aspect to it.

Did you have a follow-up on that or do you want me to talk about the OPP?

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Yves Laforest:** For example, on page 26 of your report, you say that there was a memorandum of understanding between the Ottawa Police Service and the RCMP, under the terms of which the principal investigator of the OPS reported to Assistant Commissioner Gork. You were told—and you said it yourself in your report—that this was a typographical error.

What are you referring to? Do you have the memo?

•(1415)

[English]

**Mr. David Brown:** No, I don't have that memorandum—

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Yves Laforest:** Were you aware of it?

[English]

**Mr. David Brown:** I've not personally read the memorandum of understanding. Members of our team looked at it and summarized it for me.

Let me, if I may, just address our recommendation on the OPP, because I think it is important.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Yves Laforest:** But I have to interrupt you there, Mr. Brown. I am tabling the copy of the memorandum of understanding for the committee. You mention a typographical error, but two paragraphs deal with the relationship between the inspector in charge

and Assistant Commissioner Gork. In point 3.1 of the memo, it says—and I think the reference is to Inspector Roy:

The inspector [...] will be in charge of the RCMP investigation. He will report to Assistant Commissioner D. Gork while the investigation is in progress.

If there is a typographical error, we need to know where it is. Still on the subject of the lead investigator, point 3.2 says:

Assistant Commissioner Gork, representing the RCMP, will oversee his work, and may from time to time provide instructions to help him in his inquiries.

So I believe that Inspector Gork could direct the investigation any way he liked because, as the memorandum makes clear, he had the authority to oversee the investigator's work and give him instructions as needed. I see this as a long way from typographical errors. There are no incorrect words here: an entire paragraph clearly states that the RCMP was overseeing the work of the Ottawa Police Service's investigator.

I think that it is easy to conclude from this that the investigation was not independent. In fact, the OPS's investigation was not independently conducted because it was supervised by a direct superior in the RCMP. I do not understand why you were not aware of that. You were told about a typographical error, but it seems to me that you should have examined and analyzed such an important document. I find that this was really lax on your part.

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. Brown, do you have a copy of this document he's referring to here?

**Mr. David Brown:** I don't have a copy in front of me.

**The Chair:** So it's really unfair to.... Have you seen it?

**Mr. David Brown:** No, I have not seen the text that—

**The Chair:** What we might want to consider is taking the comments in question under advisement, and perhaps you could get back to us with a letter on that point.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** As a point of clarification on this issue, this document was tabled previously, and if you check it, you'll find that it's not just a blank MOU, but it is in fact signed by former Assistant Commissioner Gork. It's a memorandum of understanding on a very serious issue, a criminal investigation into the RCMP. And I would assume that if you're signing a memorandum of understanding, you would have read through it and been clear as to its content.

**The Chair:** But Mr. Brown didn't sign it.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** No, no. Mr. Gork did.

**The Chair:** Mr. Gork signed it. Mr. Brown didn't sign it, and he said he didn't see it.

What I'm suggesting here, since Mr. Brown did not sign it and didn't see it, is that it's a little unfair to ask him to comment on it. But I think, in fairness to the committee, I would like to see Mr. Brown go over it with the staff and get back to us on Monsieur Laforest's comments and questions.

Is that okay with you, sir?

**Mr. David Brown:** Perhaps I could assist the committee and then we could go back to see if that is necessary. Would that be acceptable, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** Sure, go ahead.

• (1420)

**Mr. David Brown:** What Mr. Laforest is saying is quite correct. We concluded that the investigation by the OPP was not independent. You've concluded that it was not independent for one reason. I actually concluded it wasn't independent for a bunch of reasons, including the role that Assistant Commissioner Gork had.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Your time is up, Monsieur Laforest.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Yves Laforest:** My time has been used for points of order. I would just like to add this: it is clear that the investigation was not independent and that the independent investigator did not study this document. It seems to me that the Ottawa Police Service's report contained a large number of elements. If it was not conducted independently, a host of questions are raised, leading us to demand a public inquiry. It seems very clear to me. I feel that the matter has not been completely dealt with.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Laforest.

[English]

I'm going to leave this, Mr. Brown. If you have any additional comments after reflecting on the report, and if you want to, if you choose to get back to the committee, you're invited to do so.

Mr. Williams.

**Mr. John Williams:** I think Mr. Brown referred to the OPP. Just for the record, I think he actually meant the OPS.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Williams.

**An hon. member:** Which one is it?

**Mr. John Williams:** It's OPS, the Ottawa Police Service.

**Mr. David Brown:** Thank you, Mr. Williams.

If I said OPP, I meant that the OPS investigation was not independent and that Mr. Laforest and I were on the same page there.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Mr. Fitzpatrick, for seven minutes.

**Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick:** I will be sharing some of my time with Mr. Lake.

Sir, when we had a debate in this committee some time ago about whether we should have a public inquiry or not, the most compelling reason presented at that stage was that an independent investigator would not have the special powers that a commission of inquiry would have, the right to subpoena and compel witnesses to appear and testify, and so on. You wouldn't really be able to get into the information and the evidence and get to the real truth of the matter. Did you run into a lot of difficulty, sir, in trying to find out what happened and determining the facts based on the evidence, and so on?

**Mr. David Brown:** No, I ran into absolutely no difficulty in that regard.

One of the elements of my mandate was to make recommendations if I thought further were needed, and I was prepared as I went

into it to have to make those kinds of recommendations. As it turned out, no one denied me access to any documents. No one refused to come forward. We got all the electronic stuff that we needed. We could see that there were conflicting testimonies before this committee, so I realized I had to try to get behind that testimony. I knew I had to get full access to hard drives of computers, and so on, to be able to see what was going on. We were denied none of that.

As I said in the report, you can never know what you don't know. It doesn't matter how extensive an investigation is; you'll always have that little nagging concern that maybe there's something out there. There was no indication in what I did see that there were things lurking out there that, frankly, made me suspicious.

**Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick:** You didn't run into a potential witness who absolutely refused to be interviewed or answer your questions.

**Mr. David Brown:** No, and as a lawyer, I expected that witnesses would show up with lawyers, and I was prepared to deal with that. That didn't happen. They were prepared to be as open and candid with me as I could possibly have asked for.

**Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick:** So fortunately that turned out to be more of a red herring than a real problem, I guess.

**Mr. David Brown:** I believe so.

**Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick:** The second area on which I want to touch base with you is one that I think troubles all the members of this committee. It's some of the civilian employees who are employed in the RCMP. Quite frankly, I think some of the conduct of some of these individuals bordered on the outrageous.

I thought my knowledge of law would say you had plenty of grounds to terminate immediately for cause with some of these individuals. We're told by everyone, from former Commissioner Zaccardelli to other people, that because of the collective agreements and labour regime that are in place and so on, you can't really do that anymore. You give people pay for two years to sit at home and collect their pensions and build up their benefits or get transferred to some other branch of the government. Apparently they're even recommended to other branches of the government, and so on, and they pop up somewhere else.

I find this very disconcerting. I would think, for the whistle-blowers in the RCMP, this would be extremely frustrating. They're demoted, they're transferred for doing the right thing, and the real culprits in many cases are people who are paying, really, no penalties whatsoever because of arguments about collective agreements and so on.

Is the task force going to look at this problem and try to come to grips with it to see what can be done?

• (1425)

**Mr. David Brown:** Absolutely. I think you're focusing on a very serious deficiency throughout this piece, and I think it reflects a serious misunderstanding by the senior management of the RCMP as to what their rights and obligations were with respect to civilian employees.



I believe the civilian and public service employees are subject to the same rigorous standards that happen to be found in different places, but under the public service act and requirements, they are expected to behave with the same probity and ethical standards as the members of the RCMP. I don't think the management of the RCMP understood that, and I don't think they understood how to handle it. So one of the elements of our mandate is to try to address this issue between the members of the RCMP and the civilian employees, and that's an issue that we need to look at very carefully.

**Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick:** I also want to say before I turn my time over that I thought this was a very good report. I've read lots of reports and I think this was a very clear, concise report. I thought your summary of the facts and the chronology fit very well with what I heard before this committee—the issues that you identified with the culture and the structure of the RCMP and so on. I think everybody, in all honesty, here realizes these are the real problems we have to deal with, with the RCMP. I commend you for the good work you've done, sir.

**Mr. David Brown:** Thank you, sir.

**Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick:** I'll turn it over to Mr. Lake.

**The Chair:** A minute and a half, Mike.

**Mr. Mike Lake:** Once again, I feel I need to follow up on Mr. Wrzesnewskyj's line of questioning—I guess a simple question. It will probably be a pretty short answer.

Are you aware of any time at which Anne McLellan initiated any process like yours during the nearly two years that she was the Liberal public safety minister, after learning about the allegations?

**Mr. David Brown:** No, I'm not aware of that.

**Mr. Mike Lake:** Okay.

I like to give credit where credit is due. I've been looking for an opportunity to credit Borys for his original intuition, I guess, when this case was brought before us. Since then, it's been a partisan obsession for him, and despite the fact that the entire episode happened under the previous Liberal government, it just continues to be this partisan obsession.

**The Chair:** Any questions, Mr. Lake?

**Mr. Mike Lake:** Actually, I'll move on to my questions. I have a couple of questions to end with.

I'm curious about whether your task force will take what we've done as a committee, our recommendations when we make them, into consideration as you're doing your work.

**Mr. David Brown:** Absolutely. I was asking the chair before the hearing whether there would be a report from this committee. I think it will be very much a part of what we consider and where we go. I'm hoping there will be recommendations coming from this committee on some of the issues that are part of our task force.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Lake.

Mr. Christopherson, seven minutes.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Brown. I met you for the first time just before the meeting started and I welcome you here.

I thought it was interesting that one of your first comments when you got here was that you didn't have an opening statement because you couldn't think of anything that we didn't already have. That's the premise of where I want to go.

As you know, many of us at a certain point in the deliberations of the committee felt that we weren't going to be able to get to the bottom of this with the tools that we have because this is a limited process. It needs to go into a full public inquiry. You've disagreed; you have that right. I have to say to you that when I read your report, I didn't read a whole lot there that we didn't already have.

I would suggest to you, sir, that had the government followed your process instead of ours, you never would have gotten anywhere nearly as far as you did, because you wouldn't have gotten as far as we got. The reason we got as far as we did was the persistence that we were prepared to put to this issue. We held people; we put them under oath. You didn't. You didn't put anybody under oath, and they may not have lied to you, but they may have. They may have told you the truth, but not the whole truth.

Here, we, the four different parties that are here, as well as our professional analysts, had a chance to go over that from all different perspectives. In addition to that, the public had a chance to see what we were asking.

One of the reasons we were able to advance this agenda was because of the public feedback we had, particularly from people in the RCMP watching our hearings and contacting us and saying, "Wait a minute, let me tell you about this", and that would lead us to inviting someone in. We would put them under oath and subpoena documents if we had to. The documents are all there for the public record.

You had none of that, sir. So I would lay in front of you the argument that you haven't added much to this. I don't have a lot to disagree with in what you said, but you haven't said anything that we haven't already concluded.

So I would ask you what value-added that has given to the work of this committee—and I don't mean you personally as a professional, but your process—and whether or not you believe you could have even gotten that far without our work as a starting point.

● (1430)

**Mr. David Brown:** Let me start with your last point, which I think was also your first point. I agree with you, we would not have been able to do the job we did had it not been for the work going on in this committee. It was very much a part of what we had, the record that we had to deal with.

Second, in terms of value-added, there were some things brought before this committee that were contradictory. One of the first value-added pieces that I identified was to try to get to the bottom of some of those, because the process you had here wasn't enabling us—

**Mr. David Christopherson:** So you didn't even have anybody under oath.

**Mr. David Brown:** I didn't need to have anybody under oath.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** How do you know?

**Mr. David Brown:** You had people under oath. What I had was the ability to get behind what they were saying to see what they were saying in private moments between one another, to see what they were saying in journals, to see what they were saying—

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Is that what we should have done, instead of what you did, if it's so good?

**Mr. David Brown:** That is part of the value-added that I was able to bring to it. So I was able to, I think, answer some of the questions that you were wrestling with here. That's point number one.

On point number two, what I think I was also able to do was then to look at the facts, the facts that were not an issue—and there were a number of them coming through this committee and through the other processes, and of those, the ones that I was able to come to a conclusion on—and to determine whether there was enough there to start trying to rebuild the RCMP and to get on to the action mode. I was convinced—and I still feel very strongly about it or I would not have taken on the job as chair of the task force—that enough now has been brought to light that it is time to get on with rebuilding, and it's time to get on to the action—

**Mr. David Christopherson:** I don't mean to be rude, but I am going to interrupt because of limited time. I don't even get a second round, so I have to push on.

I'm still having a great deal of difficulty understanding why your process, with or without the task force, is as good as and a legitimate replacement for a public inquiry. I suggest to you, with great respect, that virtually any journalist here who has been following these hearings could have written your report. The stuff was all there. Anything you may have added is suspect. Nobody is under oath.

We had people come in here under oath—honourable people, without question—and we had to chase them and tell them their answers weren't fulsome enough and we weren't getting the whole truth. Then people who heard that testimony called us up and said, “You might want to bring in so-and-so because they'll contradict that.”

You didn't have any of that, sir. How can you possibly say that what you have is value-added to the same degree as what we have done, given that the public has no more idea than we do who you met with or when you met with them?

Would you at the very least give us a list of all the witnesses you met with, transcripts of those discussions, all the documents you brought in, and the dates of the meetings with all of those people, so we and the public can get close to what you tell us? You can tell us, and I'll accept your word, but in terms of moving legislation it's not good enough. So I'm asking you, at the very least, to table all of that so we can take a look at it and see where you went.

**Mr. David Brown:** On your first point, I think one of the reasons the type of investigation I was asked to conduct was put on the table was that it was necessary to get behind some of the things you were being told. By looking at records that were created, not for purposes of answering questions at the time they were being asked but to look at the things that were being said when the events were unfolding, I was quite comfortable that I was able to determine what indeed was going on by looking at those.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** We should have had you on this committee. We could have saved ourselves a lot of effort. With that great judgment and insight, you could have told us who was or was not lying.

**Mr. David Brown:** I think you'll find that having a combination of the two processes has probably produced a better result than either one by itself. I think my process benefited greatly from the work that was done at this committee. Uncovering the truth of what was going on has been aided by both your process and the process I've gone through.

• (1435)

**Mr. David Christopherson:** You can table your report, but you can't talk to us about your process. We don't know what your process was. We don't know one word of what anybody said to you, sir. We have no idea, and neither does anybody else on the planet who wasn't in the room at that time.

You said you couldn't get where you are without the work this committee did. We don't know what's in the future. Everybody who said we didn't need an inquiry into Air India and Arar used exactly the same words you did over and over until we finally did know what we didn't know. We still don't know what we don't know, and we never will if we don't get a public inquiry.

You feel certain enough to sit there and tell us you got behind what we were told, but you had none of the tools, and you didn't have the benefit of the public listening to what you were being told, to ride shotgun on the truth. Don't you find this a little bit hard for us to swallow, sir?

**Mr. David Brown:** No, I don't at all. We have an understanding of the shortcomings internally within the RCMP. I don't pretend to have the answers as to what we need to fix it, and that's why I suggested the task force. I think it's there graphically for all to see what issues need to be addressed and what the fixes need to be. Given that this institution is so important to us in Canada, it's very important for us to get on with the job of fixing it. The task force has a very short mandate and I'm the first to admit that, but it's essential that we get on with the job to identify solutions and start getting those solutions implemented.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Christopherson.

Before going to Mr. McGuinty, I want to pursue one area briefly with you, Mr. Brown. I've gone over the mandate of the task force and the eight bullets in your mandate. One issue that I see missing is any review or deliberation on the whole issue of parliamentary review.

I know this is a very complex issue; it's not a simple issue. You have to balance the public's right to know and at the same time respect the arm's-length nature of police enforcement. I believe Mr. Justice O'Connor struggled with this issue. In part II of the Arar inquiry report he talked about it.

Your initial mandate was under the executive. You were mandated by the minister and you reported to the minister. Your second mandate is similar: you're mandated by the minister and you report to the minister.

One of the pillars of executive government is secrecy and concentrated power—not this government, but the previous government, the government before that, and the government before that.

Again, I think this is an important issue. It's an issue that should be deliberated upon—whether it's needed—because we're dealing now with a public that's less deferential; it's more informed. And I believe that going forward, there's going to be a necessity for some meaningful public dialogue with Canada's national police agency, probably through Parliament in some way. That is something I hope your committee would be looking at, but I don't see it in the mandate at all.

Do you have any thoughts on that issue?

**Mr. David Brown:** You're quite right, Mr. Chair. The mandate, in the third item, talks about accountability. The words are lifted from the recommendations that I made in my report. The kinds of accountability that I was talking about there were more the internal accountability within the force itself, as well as some of the external accountabilities for the business aspects of what the force has done.

I agree that there may well be issues on the accountability of Canada's national police force to Parliament and how those accountabilities play out. I'm not certain that this task force, as it's constructed, has the expertise, or indeed the time, to get into those issues. These are early days for us, and we're just starting to understand the accountabilities. We know there are accountabilities to the Treasury Board. We know there are accountabilities through the minister to Parliament. Now, under the new statute, there are accountabilities to parliamentary committees. It is a very large issue. At this point I don't know how far we will be able to get into them.

**The Chair:** Mr. McGuinty is next, for seven minutes.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much, Mr. Brown, for coming in. Your report is an interesting read. You did a great job in a very short period of time.

I have a couple of rapid-fire questions to ask you just before we go any further.

How much did this report cost?

• (1440)

**Mr. David Brown:** We had a budget that we worked out with the Treasury Board. It was about \$3.5 million. The task force expenses came in at just under \$3.5 million. I can't give you the precise figure, but it is just below the budgeted item.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** I'm sorry, did you say the report and the task force together are \$3.5 million?

**Mr. David Brown:** I'm sorry; I said "task force", and I thank you for picking that up. For the investigation that I did, the budget was \$3.5 million.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Okay.

Forgive me, but I have to ask you this question in the interest of transparency. I'm not casting any kinds of aspersions, but I noticed that you did retain the services of your previous law firm. Can you tell me about that, and can you tell me whether that was RFP'd?

**Mr. David Brown:** Yes. I knew that I needed to get governance expertise and I knew that one of the most skilled governance experts

was in our own firm, so right from the beginning, when I was asked if I would take this on, I asked if it would be appropriate for me to retain Carol Hansell from our firm. I was told there was a process for doing that—it was through Treasury Board—so I stepped out of it, and the firm and Treasury Board negotiated the terms of that retainer. Ultimately a retainer was agreed to, and we went forward with them.

For me there just wasn't the time, given the very short period, to do a much broader search, and I knew from my own experience as a lawyer where I would find this expertise.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** So the contracting was not RFP'd?

**Mr. David Brown:** The contract for the legal services was not, no.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Do you know how much that was for?

**Mr. David Brown:** I will guess \$375,000, but I'll check to make sure that's the right number.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** It was a sole-sourced contract authorized by the Treasury Board and presumably its minister.

**Mr. David Brown:** Yes.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** How much is the task force process going to cost?

**Mr. David Brown:** I don't know. A budget is being worked out between the executive director for the task force and the Treasury Board. I don't know where they're at.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** We're already into the three-month process and we don't have the costs.

**Mr. David Brown:** I'm sorry?

**Mr. David McGuinty:** We're already into the three-month process for the task force. We have a nine-week process for the report. I understand that you're reporting in mid-December.

**Mr. David Brown:** Yes.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** We don't know what the cost will be.

**Mr. David Brown:** That is correct.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Okay. Can I talk to you about expertise and timelines? You alluded to it in a very honest and straightforward way a moment ago.

Please don't take this the wrong way, because I have a very profound respect for your background and your abilities. Have you ever conducted a multi-party engagement or deliberative process in your career?

**Mr. David Brown:** I'm sorry. A multi what?

**Mr. David McGuinty:** A multi-party engagement or deliberative process of the kind this task force is now undertaking.

**Mr. David Brown:** I've spent my entire career doing it. I spent thirty years as a lawyer mainly on large projects involving multiple law firms and multiple parties, with multiple dates and timelines. I spent a good part of my career doing it.

At the OSC, among other things in the investigative side, I was in charge of the enforcement side of the RCMP. I also oversaw the investigation of some very large potential securities violations. In a sense, it was my stock-in-trade.

•(1445)

**Mr. David McGuinty:** I understand.

Can I talk a little about the OPP and the Ottawa Police Service investigation? I'm really troubled by this.

I want to put this to you. As a QC, a Queen's Counsel lawyer with a distinguished career, how shocked were you when you discovered what you discovered about the Ottawa Police Service? What are the three reasons you gave to justify your conclusion that the investigation was not independent? I'd like to know not only how shocked you were, but why would the Canadian people believe that punting it to the OPP would now make any different whatsoever?

**Mr. David Brown:** As you know, I'd concluded that the investigation was not independent, and the Auditor General had found that it didn't have the appearance of independence. I went further. I found that it was not independent, but it didn't answer the question as to whether the investigation was flawed.

There's no question that the proper process of an investigation is to have as much independence as you can get. I understand there's a bit of a spectrum wherein you can have full independence and not enough expertise to do the job. If you have the necessary expertise, you might have a lack of independence along the way, and you have to find a balance somewhere. I don't know whether the balance was found.

I also don't know whether the result of the investigation was in any way tainted by that. When you think of it, part of the reason all of this came to light was that members of the RCMP who were part of the investigative team and were therefore not independent were the ones who brought it forward.

We had some very diligent work done by people within the RCMP. The whole issue on the insurance payments came up during the course of the investigation. It was uncovered by the RCMP people and ultimately by the RCMP internal audit.

I had indications on both sides. I had the crown attorneys saying not enough evidence came out of the investigation to lay criminal charges. I didn't know whether it was because the investigation wasn't good enough or whether the evidence wasn't there.

It seemed to me that the best way to do this was to get people who really knew what they were doing on investigations to audit what the OPS had done, look at the files, and see whether or not they believed the investigation was tainted. I understand such an audit is under way.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Last, I'm fascinated and intrigued by your recommendation on page 47 on deliberations. You mentioned your background as a transactional lawyer. I respect that, having been one at one point in time. I couldn't really cut it, not as well as you did, but I went on to spend 10 years doing stakeholder engagement. I'm a little worried about your approach to this, particularly that these deliberations, which are multi-party deliberations, are going to take place in private.

Chapter 8 is entitled "Rebuilding The Trust". How can we take it that having conversations behind closed doors, in private, is going to help rebuild trust in an organization that has had a lot of trust shaken out over the past several years? Is it really the right way to go?

**Mr. David Brown:** As I said earlier, we are consulting quite broadly and in a quite open and transparent way. We're meeting with the entire caucus of the staff representative group. We're meeting with large groups of people internally, within the RCMP. We're meeting with the cadet corps and so on. We're hoping, and we're already seeing signs of it, that people see that we are out there and we're willing to listen to anybody. We're willing to listen to them privately if they want to talk privately, or in large groups if they want to talk in large groups.

The word "secret" has been used a few times here. I don't see this as being conducted in secrecy at all. What I had recommended in my report was that the deliberations be done in private, to give people the comfort that they could come forward and talk to us and tell us how they saw things and how things should be, without feeling that their jobs were in jeopardy. We had to play that balance.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. McGuinty.

Mr. Poilievre, for seven minutes.

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Nepean—Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Brown, thank you for your report.

I'd like to first of all point out that the witnesses we've had in your chair throughout this extended process do not share the opposition's obsession with holding a public inquiry. So I want you to know that you are in very good company amongst many other distinguished witnesses—in fact most, if not all—who have not suggested that we need a public inquiry. In fact, only yesterday a former minister of the Crown and a former Deputy Prime Minister, Ms. McLellan, sat in that very chair and suggested that a public inquiry was not needed.

So simply to start out, I would like to give you some comfort in knowing that you are surrounded by many distinguished witnesses who share your view that there is another way forward.

I'm interested in another subject, though, and it has to do with personnel.

Jim Ewanovich, after an internal audit, was relieved of his duties back in October 2003, but he was not terminated for cause. He was allowed to stay on the payroll until a separation agreement occurred in April 2004, more than a year later.

Dominic Crupi was relieved of his duties on November 23, 2003. Through a combination of leave entitlements he was allowed to remain with the RCMP until June 2005, when he resigned. When he appeared before our committee, we learned, surprisingly, that he was still on government payroll until a couple of months ago when our government actively sought his removal.

These are people who were actively involved in this mess. Not only were they involved, they were known to have been involved. My question is, why doesn't anyone ever get fired in government? What recommendations can you make to see that when these sorts of acts of wrongdoing happen and we know the culprit, they lose their jobs and we don't keep them on payroll or give them promotions?

•(1450)

**Mr. David Brown:** I think you make a very good point. What we found was that it depended on where you were in the hierarchy of the RCMP, how you were treated if you were found to have been guilty of misconduct. We found this to be one of the very serious cultural issues within the RCMP.

Like you, I was very concerned that the people at the top who ultimately were found to have breached the rules were given what I call in my report, for want of a better term, a soft landing. I think this conveyed some very serious and unfortunate messages throughout the rest of the force, where the standard of conduct and compliance is much higher.

People do get fired in the RCMP, but it tends to be more prevalent and easier to do at the lower levels than at the top. It's one of the things that I think this task force needs to look into very carefully, I agree with you.

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** What legal instruments could be used to change collective agreements, or whatever it is that's blocking termination, so that we can get rid of the bad apples? You're a lawyer. I'm certainly not a labour lawyer, but I'd like to know if you can tell us what instruments we can recommend that would empower the leaders of government agencies and organizations to fire the bad guys. Give us some ideas here.

**Mr. David Brown:** It would be premature of me. We're too early in our process for me to be able to tell you whether or not there are actually processes and procedures there that, had they been implemented, would have achieved the results you're talking about. So I need to know, first of all, whether the mechanism is there already and it wasn't used. And secondly, if the mechanism is not there, then I think we need to get into the kind of inquiry you're talking about. We're not there yet.

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** Since this sordid affair occurred, our government has introduced whistle-blower protection for public servants and RCMP personnel. That protection exists in statutory law, and it is overseen by, first, an officer of Parliament and, second, a tribunal of judges. How do you see whistle-blowers in the RCMP interacting with that new legislation?

**Mr. David Brown:** Well, first of all, the new legislation applies to the RCMP. It applies not only to members of the RCMP, but also to public servants who are employed by the RCMP. I'm not an expert on the act; I have seen many of the parts of it. For the first time, it's very clear now that there is whistle-blower protection available throughout the entire range of employees of the RCMP, and that's very important.

As I understand it, the act for the RCMP allows the RCMP's own mechanisms with respect to their members to play out, but the whistle-blower has the ability to jump over and to deal with the parliamentary person who is responsible for it.

I think it's early days. As I understand it, the act was only proclaimed April 15, but I think this is a very positive step for the RCMP.

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** Do you worry about the fact that they go through the internal system first in the RCMP?

**Mr. David Brown:** I can't say that I worry about it, but it is an issue we need to look at. As I pointed out in my report, merely superimposing a whistle-blower protection system on a system that has a code of conduct violation—that is part of a militaristic or paramilitary organization—doesn't quite work. That interface needs to be worked out.

One of the things we are proposing to do in the task force is to see whether there need to be changes either to the whistle-blowing part of it or to the code of conduct part of it, so that those two can work in harmony.

•(1455)

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. McGuinty made some effort to point out the costs of your work. How would the costs of your work compare with the cost of a full-blown public inquiry?

**Mr. David Brown:** I could tell you what ours costs. I don't know what a public inquiry would cost.

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** Somebody tells me it was \$80 million for Gomery. I'm not sure that's the right number, but....

**Mr. David Brown:** I can't tell you.

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. McGuinty suggests \$100 million.

**The Chair:** I think we are a bit off topic here, so—

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** Okay. Thank you.

**The Chair:** —thank you very much, Mr. Poilievre.

Just as one minor issue, Mr. Brown, I might get you to identify the other members of the task force who are serving with you.

**Mr. David Brown:** Certainly. We are five, as you know, Chair, and I'll go from east to west.

Larry Murray is one of our members of the task force. Many of you may know Larry Murray. He's a former deputy minister, having just taken retirement a couple of months ago. I think his last posting was as Deputy Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. He has a long history with the military, and part of his responsibilities in Fisheries and Oceans involved the coast guard.

Richard Drouin, who was for a good part of his working career the CEO and chair of Hydro-Québec, has since retiring from that taken on a number of business initiatives, and he sits on a number of boards of directors. He also has served on one of the Quebec police oversight organizations. So he brings to the task force not only business acumen and knowledge of what happens in a boardroom, but some experience with oversight of police.

Norman Inkster, who's a former Commissioner of the RCMP, is a member of the task force. He's been consulting on police matters for police services since he retired.

Linda Black, who is a lawyer from Calgary, also sits on a police services board in Calgary. She's actually a native of Newfoundland and grew up and practised law in Newfoundland, but has been living in Calgary.

And of course there's me.

Those are the five of us. I'm very pleased with the range of backgrounds and skill sets we have at the table. Norman Inkster is the only member I had met before. In fact, we didn't as a group know one another, but we're interacting well, and the perspectives that are being brought to the table, I think, will really serve us well.

**The Chair:** And do you expect to meet the task force's December 31 deadline?

**Mr. David Brown:** At the present time, we are driving towards December 14. Our mandate ends December 31, but there's a hiatus there. We realize that to bring forward a report during that hiatus just wouldn't make sense, so we're driving to have a report available by December 14, which is the middle Friday in December.

**The Chair:** Mr. Brown, on behalf of the committee, I want to thank you very much for being here today. We certainly wish you well as you continue your efforts on the task force. We look forward to hearing from you again.

**Mr. David Brown:** Thank you, Chair.

**The Chair:** Colleagues, we'll take a five-minute adjournment, and we'll resume again.

• \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

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• (1500)

**The Chair:** I want to first of all welcome everyone back. This is the last session of these two days of meetings we have held regarding the RCMP pension and insurance plans.

We're very pleased, colleagues, to have with us this afternoon the Minister of Public Safety, Mr. Stockwell Day.

Thank you, Minister, for coming to the committee. I understand that you do not have a formal opening statement, but you have a few opening remarks that you would like to address to the committee. If so, I invite you to present them to the committee.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety):** Mr. Chair, I would just like to say that I appreciate the work of this committee and its members, and I look forward to their questions.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** That's what you would call a brief opening statement.

We're going to follow the same format as we did in the last meeting, colleagues. We're going to have one round of seven minutes.

We'll go to Mr. Wrzesnewskyj.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** Thank you, Chair.

I'd like to start off by thanking Mr. Lake for his compliment. As elected officials, we have a duty and an obligation to the electorate when we hear serious allegations of this sort to act upon them. In fact, the duty and responsibility for that are that much greater for a minister of the Crown, especially for the Minister of Public Safety.

My first question to you, Minister, is this: when did you first hear of these serious allegations arising out of the RCMP pension and insurance funds?

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** Well, in the mass of briefings that a new minister gets upon assuming a portfolio, which begin the first day and I presume don't cease until the last day the minister is on the job...that decision, of course, is up to the Prime Minister, or my constituents, or a combination of the two. Briefings are massive and necessary and intensive.

I would say it would definitely have been after a few months on the job when I became aware, when it was brought to my attention that the matter was under consideration by the Auditor General. As a matter of fact, I discussed it with the Auditor General before she appeared here. I also raised the issue with then Commissioner Zaccardelli. That would have been sometime after the middle of the fall of 2006. Sometime in the fall of 2006 I questioned the commissioner of the day on the issue and also on what his sense of it was. So it was sometime in the latter part of 2006.

• (1505)

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** Perhaps you weren't aware of this, but in fact one of your caucus colleagues back in April 2004 had a lot of this information. In fact, he asked very pointed questions. It was Mr. Sorenson, in the House of Commons, and on that point he said:

Mr. Speaker, for almost a year the RCMP commissioner knew about the misappropriation of moneys from the RCMP pension funds. In fact, it was that commissioner who shut down the initial probe...

He goes on to state:

Mr. Speaker, the RCMP commissioner's job is to defend and protect past and present members of the force, not to run defence...

This seems to indicate there may have been a cover-up. This is back as far as 2004. Why were there no concrete actions? In fact, in the fall—you mentioned the fall of last year—it appeared for months that it was no longer tenable to keep Mr. Zaccardelli on the job. You were the decision-maker, or in fact were you receiving instructions from the Prime Minister to keep Mr. Zaccardelli on the job notwithstanding how untenable it was at that point in time?

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** No, not at all.

I'm sorry, I didn't follow the first part of your question. You said a Conservative member had raised in 2004 that they thought a Liberal cover-up was going on. I know that was a sense that was largely shared by many people, including Liberals, so could you just redefine that question?

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** No, it wasn't a Liberal cover-up. What it does indicate, sir, is that as far back as 2004 you were aware of this fact and aware of the fact that there were concerns that the commissioner may not have been acting appropriately. You were made minister. You received briefings, as you've said, fulsome briefings. I would suspect that you would have much greater information than we have. It is your responsibility, as a minister of the Crown. You did not act in the fall. In fact, there is a letter—and the communications went on and on—from a law firm of December 6 of alleged cover-ups of potential criminal activities. It was sent to you and copied to the Prime Minister. These are very serious allegations. There wasn't a response to this letter.

Yesterday someone—I think it was Mr. Fitzpatrick—talked of a situation of do nothing, say nothing. In fact, that's incorrect. Something did occur. Your colleagues here for months blocked our ability to bring witnesses and evidence forward, and it wasn't until the spring, when we had done our work, that you acted. Why did you not act when this information was brought forward to you? It is difficult to believe you didn't have greater amounts of information, more fulsome information, than we did.

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** I find the questioning somewhat curious, interesting. In your remarks you talked about a Conservative member raising the possibility of a Liberal cover-up of something that had been going on, apparently for years—

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** You are misrepresenting what I stated, Minister.

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** —so I'm curious about what you were doing with all the information, which I did not have, in the years that you were sitting there and you knew about this. I'm curious. If I could just—

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** I have a point of order.

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** If I could continue, I've listened carefully—

**The Chair:** Order. Try to keep the politics out of it as much as possible, gentlemen.

Go ahead, Mr. Wrzesnewskyj.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** I'll move on since we're not getting an answer from you on this particular question.

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** Mr. Poilievre, on a point of order.

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** Yesterday you were very liberal in your use of that gavel when I was exchanging questions and answers with Ms. McLellan. You indicated at that time there would not be any interruptions—

**The Chair:** Do you have a point of order?

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** If you could be consistent in the way you apply the rules, we would really appreciate it.

**The Chair:** Order.

That is not a point of order.

Mr. Wrzesnewskyj, back to you.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** Thank you, Chair.

Mr. Day, I understand that there is a sworn affidavit before the courts that you were made aware of interference by Mr. Zaccardelli's RCMP in our political processes. Surprisingly, it is a sworn affidavit by a candidate of the Conservative Party.

When you were made aware of this particular very serious allegation, what did you do? When did you hear about it, and what did you do?

• (1510)

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** Thank you for pausing long enough for me to answer a series of questions, and I'll try to do that now. If you can show me the same respect as I'm showing you, which is to wait for you to finish and then to respond, I'd appreciate that.

I will repeat, I do find it ironic that this entire episode, taken place under the Liberal regime, during a period of time in which we saw zero action on a very serious matter.... And I am not pointing culpability at any elected person. I'm just saying there was zero action.

I'll repeat what I said. When I became aware of this and posed the questions first of all to the commissioner and heard from him that the matter was indeed being looked at by the Auditor General, I contacted the Auditor General and said I would be looking forward to her deliberations on this. As a matter of fact, we were all looking forward to her deliberations on this. I met with her in November on that, and she confirmed to me that she would be publicly making her observations known on the whole matter. She did that on February 21, I believe, in front of this committee. On March 28, at this committee, allegations were so serious about wrongdoing, which was a surprise to many of us, that the very next day, March 29, I announced that there had to be an investigation into this matter, and by April 12 we had announced that there would be an investigative body put together to do that. They began their work. They delivered their work on June 15.

I agree with the chairman. I don't think this should descend into political partisanship. You've certainly been known to take that position on this particular issue—again somewhat ironically given that it was a Liberal mismanagement—but that's your right to do.

I took action. I took swift action, not wanting, of course, to undercut the Auditor General but wanting to hear fully. She had a right to speak fully, not just to me but to the committee and to the public, about this. Knowing that no action had been taken for years, my colleagues and I determined it was time. We wanted action. We wanted answers. We wanted it as soon as possible, but we also wanted there to be prudence in the whole investigation so that we could make some headway on this.

That's in fact what I did, and I think the record shows that my movement on this was not only exemplary because it was recommended by people wiser than I, including members of your caucus, but also because the people of Canada wanted answers to the questions that were being posed—very serious matters. We took those matters very seriously, and we acted on them, and we continue to act on them.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** The second question wasn't answered.

**The Chair:** There's another round, Mr. Wrzesnewskyj.

Monsieur Laforest, for seven minutes.

**Mr. John Williams:** Mr. Wrzesnewskyj made reference to a letter from a lawyer in December 2006. Has that been tabled? If it hasn't, will he table it?

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** It has been tabled in the past, yes.

**The Chair:** Monsieur Laforest.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Yves Laforest:** Good afternoon. Mr. Minister. You said that problems arose when the Liberals were in power and that you have worked to resolve them. Yesterday, Mr. Fitzpatrick talked about how the RCMP came into the world, and I jokingly wondered if it had a conservative father and a liberal mother, or the other way around. In the same vein, I am suggesting to you today that the RCMP has some genetic problems, serious problems that have become apparent in the last few months.

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts is now holding its 18<sup>th</sup> meeting on this matter. You may be the last witness that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts hears. Today we heard from new commissioner Elliott who told us about his strategy for restoring confidence and rebuilding. But the appointment of a man who worked to censor the O'Connor Report leaves a bitter taste in our mouths when we think about the need for transparency in the reform process.

We found out that Mr. Brown, whom we saw earlier, to whom you entrusted the chairmanship of a working group, and who wrote a report, was not even aware himself of all the information that I consider to be relevant. I am specifically thinking about the independence of the investigation conducted by the Ottawa Police Service on the problems in the RCMP. We have found out that he mentioned it in his report, but that he was not familiar with it himself. So there are some significant blunders.

I return to the need for a public inquiry—I stressed it this morning as did several others—so that we can shed real light on this. Frankly, I can tell you that we do not feel that we are any further along. We only have bits and pieces of information. After 18 meetings, we know more, I agree, but we believe that there is more to know. But we do not feel that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts has the mandate to get to the bottom of these things. We are not investigators and our resources are limited.

Mr. Brown suggested a group working behind closed doors to solve problems that arose from a lack of transparency. That seems to us to defy logic. A number of people are asking for a public inquiry. We are not alone in asking for one, some newspapers have repeatedly done so.

What do you think? Do you feel that the public will really be able to regain confidence in the RCMP? There is a real crisis of confidence.

This morning, Mr. Elliott mentioned some shortcomings. I am afraid that—as I told him again—this is not about some shortcomings, this is about a basic structural problem.

• (1515)

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** The question of trust is very important. I agree with the view that you expressed here. It is also important to understand that opinions differ on the question of a public inquiry. Let us remember that Mr. Brown listened to all the witness who came before the committee, that he read more than 4,000 emails about the problem, considered about 35,000 pages of documentation and heard more than 100 hours of evidence. He and his committee colleagues had access to all the information. After all that, he provided recommendations that I think are very important.

Opinions differ on whether a public inquiry should be held at some stage. This is a very serious undertaking and would be very expensive. Inquiries of that kind take a lot of time, and we want to see progress and solutions. As you said, we want the RCMP to be transparent, strong and effective. This is why we decided to put this process in place. I am very confident, and it is important that I be confident, given that none of these matters occurred in our government, in Canada's New Government, if I may use the term. This all happened in a previous administration. It is not for me to defend it, but I am like all Canadians from coast to coast; I am very concerned about the safety of our communities, our streets and our citizens. This is why I am convinced that the process we have chosen will provide answers on matters of security. I respect that fact that we disagree on this subject.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Laforest:** From all your comments, I specifically take note of your view that a public inquiry would cost a lot of money. Everyone knows that, I feel. But I believe that it is a transparent way of letting everyone discover the facts, and would lead to real reform of the RCMP.

Do you not think that, in spite of the costs, you should go further? Is that an obstacle? You brought the matter up. People want a reformed RCMP. The fact that it is no longer functioning and that it is now a long way from its original mission costs a lot of money too.

I think that some people would pay for it themselves. You do not put a price on something like this.

• (1520)

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** Cost is one factor, but it is not the most important. I am sure that you do not mean that the entire RCMP is no longer working; some people say so, and others think it, but this is not the majority of Canadians. There have been problems at the RCMP, especially in upper levels of management. Mr. Brown said so, and so did the Auditor General. We also have become convinced of it. That is why we have put in place this process that is supposed to bring about solutions.

Operationally, the RCMP is working well. But there are problems. As I have said, I respect the fact that we do not share the same view. We need firm and effective solutions as soon as possible. When we see the recommendations in December, maybe our opinion will be different.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Laforest:** But we are going to continue to ask for a public inquiry.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Poilievre, seven minutes.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** I would first like to thank our minister for coming before us. Mr. Day, you are here to speak to us today about solving the present problems and to clean up after the scandals that have taken place. But yesterday, the goal was different; we have talked about what took place under the previous liberal government. This is the reason we invited the minister who appeared before you did. So our discussion is in two parts: what we are doing to fix the problems—and my congratulations to you for that—and the scandal that happened when the Liberals were in power.



[English]

Ms. McLellan said some interesting things. First of all, she agreed with almost every witness we've had on the panels that there is no need for a public inquiry. That was the first thing she said.

Secondly, she indicated that she supported the approach you have taken. She said the following: "Mr. Day, the minister, discharged his responsibility by asking Mr. Brown to do what he did". I admire her for her non-partisanship in recognizing your efforts.

She also recognized your efforts in implementing the O'Connor report. Can you tell us how the progress is going on the implementation of that report, Minister Day?

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** On your first observations, I also noticed Ms. McLellan's remarks. I reviewed them yesterday. I will say it's difficult in an atmosphere of highly charged political rhetoric to take a non-partisan position. Now, I believe she did that when she was commenting on the way I'd handled the situation. Of course, if she disagreed with how I had handled it, I'd like to think I'd be able to make the same statement right now.

I think she was taking a fair view. She knows what it's like to be in this position, and she knows the length and complexity of a public inquiry. Though she and I may have disagreed on any number of things and issues and policies over the period of time when we sat opposite one another in the House of Commons, I do believe she was always wanting to find an efficient way to get work done, especially as related to security.

Ladies and gentlemen, let's face it, around this table we all know what political partisanship is. We all get into it as a necessary and vital, or vibrant, part of democracy. But when it comes to the safety and security of our country, the more we can set aside partisanship, the better for our citizens. I think they really expect that when it comes to safety and security.

So I appreciated her observations that I had discharged my duties in more or less the appropriate manner. I wasn't surprised to see that she agreed that it probably wouldn't be best to go to a full public inquiry, because of the length of time—and money is one consideration, but not the only one. But we want answers and we want solutions, and that's why we've moved on this.

On the latter part of your question related to the O'Connor inquiry, all of the recommendations related to the RCMP, if not completed, are in the stage of being fully implemented. I said, and the Prime Minister said—our government said—right from the start when those recommendations came out that we agreed with them and wanted to see them put in place.

I guess the silver lining, if there is one, in the dark cloud of these types of serious problems—the Arar problem and this one—is that changes do take place that make for a better system. With the changes that the RCMP has put in place—the memoranda of understanding and the operational understanding between the RCMP and CSIS that have been achieved, and the operational understanding between the security agencies in Canada and other countries, notably the United States, in terms of what type of information should be shared and how it should be shared—some great improvements have been made.

It took a tragic situation for those improvements to come into being, but in fact, just to answer that question, there has been very successful implementation of the recommendations coming from the Arar inquiry.

• (1525)

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** Minister, former Commissioner Zaccardelli met with you at some point throughout the process and told you that he had problems with the limitation period for dealing with employees who had been involved in misconduct. You've been very open about that. What's your view on the limitation period? Do you think it needs to be extended so that we can go back farther and punish misconduct in the force?

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** There are problems with that limitation period. I'm sure it's mystifying to Canadians when they see that alleged misconduct took place—let's say on a particular file—and then the one-year limitation that is set out within the act is arrived at and it appears then that no further action takes place and the person, if they were guilty, appears to be off the hook. That's a frustrating thing for people to consider.

I would like to add at this point that even with that limitation period, there is no limitation on criminal charges. No member of the RCMP would be absolved of any criminal activity or charges because of the one-year limitation—

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** But we want to start firing these people who engage in clear misconduct.

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** On the area of misconduct I think there needs to be a change. I've indicated that. It's one of the areas that I've asked that the task force consider when the report comes out, hopefully late in December, because there's a balance here.

With a one-year limitation, what you're saying is that the premise behind it is that a member who is under some serious allegations should not have an accusation hanging over his or her head indefinitely. That's simply not right. On the other hand, if you allow the limitation period to be too long, the thing would never get investigated. But we don't want even the appearance of somebody getting around a misconduct ruling just because a limitation period could run out, because there could be an accusation—I'm not saying it's happening—that the investigation purposely took so long that it didn't get down to the area of deciding on the misconduct.

So I'm asking that this area be looked at and a productive way found to address that problem.

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** You're responsible for security right across this country. What would be the impact on Canadian security if we were to go ahead with Mr. Wrzesnewskyj's suggestion of August 2006 that Hezbollah should be legalized?

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** On the suggestion of legalizing Hezbollah, whoever would make that or whether it was made or not—

• (1530)

**The Chair:** This is totally politics. It's got nothing to do with matter.

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** Do you want just a general response to that, Mr. Chairman?

**The Chair:** No.

Mr. Christopherson, you have seven minutes.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Thanks, Chair.

Thank you, Minister, for attending today.

Sorry. Do I have the floor, Chair?

**The Chair:** You have the floor.

The interpreters can only handle one speaker at a time, so I'd like everyone to appreciate their difficulty.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Great. Thank you. I have the floor.

Yes, I'll slow down for the translators. Thank you.

I want to open with...and Minister, I'll give you a chance to comment. There'll be a question. There'll be a number of things I'll say. I'll give you time. I just want to lay out why I personally think you went this route instead of a public inquiry, and I don't think it's anything particularly deep or difficult to figure out.

The fact of the matter is, if you ask anybody—current minister, former minister, ordinary working person, just about anybody in this room—“How would you like to have a public inquiry on the job you're doing?”, most of us would say, “Thanks, but no thanks.” That's understandable from a human nature point of view, and I would use that to say why former Minister McLellan took that position personally. She'd have been crazy to take any other position.

From a personal point of view, I think it was done because, quite frankly, Minister, you didn't want to have to deal with what would come tumbling out. You can't control it. Once you start these things, they take on a life of their own. We saw what came out in Arar. We saw what is coming out in Air India. And I believe you were trying to avoid all of that. You didn't want to open up a whole new front, and this was a way of containing it and packaging it.

It's worked politically to the extent that you still drive the bus and we don't have a public inquiry. So far you're winning. But I really don't think you've served the RCMP or the process well.

I gave your investigator a chance to respond to my allegation that he really didn't provide much value-added, that most of what he wrote about we found out and came from being in the public domain. He didn't refute that much. He had a couple of small details, and I think that's the proof of the pudding.

And that's why we're maintaining still that there needs to be a public inquiry, for the same reasons that the pressure was on for Arar, and for the same reasons that pressure was on for Air India. So I want to put that there as to why I think what's going on is going on, and to give you a chance to respond.

Here's what I'm curious about, as a question, Minister. And I accept totally that the actions happened before your time, before your government, and much of the responsibility belongs to the Liberals. There's only a small piece that yours, but nonetheless you are the minister of the day.

If history had unfolded differently, and if the first time we had witnesses come in on the Auditor General's report, when we were told by serious brass within the police community involved in this, from the Ottawa Police Service and the RCMP, that everything was fine with the investigation by the Ottawa Police Service, and that

quite frankly anything wrong internally was really just internal administrative matters, we had accepted that, Minister, all the things that came tumbling out, that we found out, through this committee would not have come out. We would have addressed the auditing issue. It might have got a little bit of oomph in the media, but not a lot. That would have been the end of it. But for you, the issue would still be real and it would still be there in your ministry to be resolved, but without our playing a role in it.

My question to you is this. How would you have ultimately gotten hold of this issue and resolved it, given the current way you run your office, if we hadn't done the work we did?

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** On the first part of your question, David, let me say that it's a time-honoured tradition that.... Well, on both parts of your question, number one, we usually don't spend time, especially committee time, on hypotheticals, but I'm willing to do that to answer your question. The second thing is, we don't try to impugn or determine motives from the words of another member. We determine from their actions and what they do or say in the House, but the motive behind it.... So I'm somewhat fascinated that you would think that a motive....

If what you're saying were true—you have this public inquest, and all the truth comes tumbling out—and at the same time you say that none of this happened under our watch, then from a partisan point of view I should have jumped on a public inquest, because it's all going to be stuff about the Liberals, according to what you're saying. We had nothing and we have nothing to hide on this, because it didn't happen under our watch.

I agree, David, we have a difference of opinion. You want the full public inquiry route, which at best is a multi-year process. I share the views of many people that the problems within the RCMP can't wait that long to be addressed, and that the men and women of the force who do their jobs every day so incredibly well that this force continues to have one of the best reputations as a national police force in the world.... I think they want this stuff dealt with also.

I would say that one of the litmus tests of the process we've put in place, as I did when I announced Mr. Brown would do the investigation, is that the very officers who were instrumental in bringing forward the problems—and I understand this committee feels they should be commended for that, and we do too, and that was actually part of Mr. Brown's recommendation—are themselves, by and large, not saying that this is a bad process we're following. As a matter of fact, the ones I've seen interviewed said they want to move along with this process, that they want to get things done.

So the people who probably had the most at stake, the people who had the most invested—literally from their hearts, because they took a big career challenge in raising these things—are themselves not clamouring for the inquest, because they believe this is moving along.

Now, we'll see in December when the recommendations come out. If there's a strongly different view, if we're not able to achieve what we want to achieve, I might be saying to you that maybe you have a point or maybe that you don't. But the task force needs time to work and to dig to the bottom of this.

All information was made available to Mr. Brown. I said in my previous remarks that he saw almost 4,000 e-mails and 35,000 pages of documents; he reviewed 100 hours of verbal testimony, had access to every person. The RCMP commissioner—

•(1535)

**Mr. David Christopherson:** I have my answer, Minister. Thank you.

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** —Commissioner Busson, commanded all officers to report and deliver, if they were called upon. So I think, David, we'll agree to disagree on this.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** The proof will be in the pudding; I accept that.

You made good points. I would just answer to you that given the nature of the Harper government, the word “control” is enough to respond to what you're saying. Your government does not like anything that you can't control.

What?

**The Chair:** It's a little political. Let's keep to the question.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** We're having a fine time.

Okay.

The other thing is that you still have some responsibility there. I would suggest to you, sir, that you should be worried about how you're going to have to deal with that.

So, fair enough from all that. I suspect we may yet hear from a lot of groups that have a vested interest.

The time is up? Do I have any time at all?

**The Chair:** Finish your question, and we'll hear a response.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Thank you.

There's one question I didn't get a direct answer to. I've tabled the question in the House and haven't had an answer yet.

To give us a better sense of what happened with Mr. Brown's investigation, would you please direct that we receive the tabling of a list of the witnesses, the transcripts of the questions and answers that were given, the dates of the meetings, and the list of all the documents that were presented, so that we can at least get closer to the way we do business vis-à-vis this report.

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** I'd say, David, that first I'd have to see, within the confines of how the committee was constructed, whether that is even legal to do. I'd have to check that, because you realize that one of the benefits of Mr. Brown's being able to talk to people was that they would be able to be in a room where they would have the confidence that what they were going to say would not be held against them.

As you know, the structure is not yet in place, in terms of recommendations for the change of governance and the ability of people to come forward. I think that would be very important first, before I were to take that action. And I don't know that I could. The fact that people were told they would be able to come in confidence.... I believe they would have said things there that, had they known it was all going to be on the record, they might have been reluctant, might have been fearful, to say.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** That would be the point, Minister.

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** They're talking about maybe some of the senior officials.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Who are they talking about? It may be other people.

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** I think it's also important to realize that even in this committee of fine, upstanding parliamentarians, who believe in democracy right around the table, there are times when you vote to go in camera, when you say, we don't want the public seeing what we're talking about. There are good reasons to do that at times—not always—and I believe there are good reasons why Mr. Brown did his investigation the way he did, so that he would—

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Will you undertake to at least consider it, to look at it and give me a response?

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** I don't want any headline tomorrow saying, “Day considers opening up all documents”.

I don't even know if there's a legal impediment, so I'm being very honest with you. I'm pleased with the process—I'm satisfied. I think it meets the demands of our getting to the bottom of things, and unless I see otherwise, this is the way the process should continue to unfold, in my view.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Christopherson.

Before we go to Mr. McGuinty, I just want to clarify a last remark. I don't want to leave any misunderstanding out there.

This committee does go in camera frequently, mostly to discuss committee reports and committee business. Any time we're hearing witnesses, it's extremely unlikely and highly unusual for us to go in camera. We have in the past. Perhaps in hindsight, it probably wasn't the thing to do. It's something that has happened, I believe, once or twice in the last seven years that I've been on the committee. So it's not something we would do in the committee.

But I have a question, Mr. Day, and I just want to get your thoughts on it. I guess it's something I wrestle with, and I don't know if I have any clear answers.

You are the responsible minister for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and in addition to that, you have a lot of other agencies dealing with national security. You have a very large and important portfolio. The protocol that has been followed for a long time now is that there is an arm's-length relationship between you and the law enforcement agencies. That has perhaps worked well, but when you see things get off the rails—and we've seen that in the Maher Arar inquiry, and we've seen it in this particular instance.... This tradition has been with us a long time and perhaps has served us well, but perhaps it's something we should review.

You have a lot of agencies under your responsibility. Do you have any thoughts on this going forward?

•(1540)

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** That's a fair question, Chairman. It actually leads up to, and we may even get into a discussion of, the area of oversight in general—oversight of agencies, especially when it comes to the security, safety, intelligence-gathering agencies.

I want to see some changes in how that is done. I want to see it improved so that the minister isn't always totally responsible. I don't mind being responsible, but there's a shared carrying of that load. That's one of the things that the Brown task force, as you know, is going to be looking at in terms of possible change in governance structure. So I am very open to changes there.

I think that's been voiced around this committee. There have been recommendations from this committee to that effect, recommendations that I've also asked be taken into consideration as the Brown task force does its work. I will want to have, as any member of Parliament would, some input into what I think would not just be more effective oversight, but also oversight that has the appearance of being effective and is not tinged with partisanship or other things that might in any way detract from our capabilities to be the safest and most secure country in the world.

**The Chair:** Mr. McGuinty, seven minutes.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Minister, thank you for coming.

I'll try to keep this on the up-and-up, Minister, although I have to admit to you that it's been very difficult. I think some of your comments here today have been cheap. I think that your penchant to play a blame game has been constant since you've been appointed to cabinet and since you arrived in government. For that matter, I think Mr. Poilievre, who worked for you for three years, has been well trained.

But I want to ask you this, having just had the author of the report in front of us tell us it cost \$3.5 million and that he contracted his own or previous law firm to do \$375,000 of work without RFPs, on the authority of the President of the Treasury Board. Did you know anything about that, first of all, and did you authorize it?

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** Anything to do with expenses related to this work had to go before Treasury Board and meet all Treasury Board guidelines. Many of those Treasury Board guidelines in place before this government arrived have actually been improved. The Federal Accountability Act, I think, is demonstrative of that, and it has in fact been hailed, even by our adversaries, as the toughest government accountability act we've seen in Canadian history. It was put in place by our government. So everything that was done, and had to be done, had to meet Treasury Board guidelines. And that is my instruction when it comes to the accommodation of work, when it comes to secretariat support, and when it comes to the pretty significant expertise required: it has to meet Treasury Board guidelines.

I just have to say also—

• (1545)

**Mr. David McGuinty:** So you know nothing about that?

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** Perhaps I could finish, David, as I allowed you to speak at length.

I have to say, David, that when I opened my comments—

**Mr. David McGuinty:** It's Mr. McGuinty.

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** —I made a point, first of all, of not taking any committee time. I wanted your questions and your advice. I did not stray into areas of partisanship. The first round of questioning—

fair enough, as this is an open session with freedom of speech—was very partisan.

I reflected on the fact that it happened under another regime.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Minister, could we just go back to the questions for a second? This is a well-worn technique.

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** I want to close with this thought—

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Do you have any knowledge—

**The Chair:** Let the minister finish, and then we're going to go to you, Mr. McGuinty.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I wish he would.

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** Thank you.

I just want to make the clarification that I have not entered this discussion today in a partisan way. I've said we want to get a system that meets the safety and security needs of our country. I'm saying that to take issue with how you characterized my response to a very partisan opening from your colleague, which he's free to do, but I will respond in kind, just to keep the record straight.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Minister, how much will it cost to conduct a task force?

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** We don't have a definite figure on that. We want to make sure there's no serious limitation to the ability of the task force to hear from individuals, from groups. This task force could lead to what would be the most significant changes in the governance structure of the RCMP possibly in its lifetime. We want to make sure that they're able to get it right.

As I said, anything they want to do, any expenses, must go before the Treasury Board. If you have some suggestions on curtailing costs or keeping within a certain limit, I'd certainly be interested to hear those.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** If the task force reports, Minister, that there ought to be a public inquiry here, will you appoint, create, and fund a public inquiry?

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** It's hypothetical, but I would be in a pretty tough position politically if that task force came out saying they can't do the work, that there has to be a public inquiry. I think I would be under a lot of pressure to give that fair consideration. It's hypothetical, but that's my reflection at this point.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Do you believe the way in which the task force is going to conduct its affairs, i.e., with most of the interviews conducted behind closed doors...? You've read this report presumably, right?

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** Yes.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** This report is rife with references to secrecy, lack of transparency, fear, and all kinds of challenges inside the culture of the organization. Do you think it's appropriate that the task force you've struck and are now funding conduct almost all of its deliberations privately?

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** I do, and for this reason: you're asking people to come forward. As with the last piece of work that was done, similarly with this one, there are going to be cases where people are going to be coming forward, and they're going to be using real-life examples of where they feel their management has failed them or where they feel the structure has failed them.

As with many similar bodies, when you are asking information from individuals that at least they fear could be used against them by others who might not be, let's say, as liberal in their feelings of seeing improvements, then unless you can guarantee them some level of confidence, you limit the ability to have people really coming forward and saying, "Here are some changes we need." Presumably, then, at that task force those members would say, "Well, why do you think we need that change?" Then they're going to be talking about individuals with whom they work. They're going to be talking about things that could affect promotions, their careers. Allowing that type of confidence to exist in a period of questioning, I think, for these purposes is vital.

It appears we have a disagreement on that, David, but I think it's important that this kind of confidence is there for some of the individuals to come forward. There are also going to be people coming forward representing labour positions on many issues and differences in structure. Again, whether on the corporate side, whether on the labour side, whether on the legislative side, or whether it's just people who are going to be talking about their work environment, they need to be able to do that in confidence.

The thing about this task force being independent is not that they have anything to hide. As a matter of fact, they want to find out what people are afraid of talking about and make their recommendations based on that. We appear to have a disagreement on that, and I respect that.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Minister, what is the status of the OPP investigation of this matter?

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** Well, it's certainly not complete. I'm glad that in the first task force, and I'm sure this must be, to the viewers who are watching by the hundreds of thousands... I think it's important that they know that this has been handed off, that this is being looked into. In the first part of work that Mr. Brown did, that was one of his recommendations. Now, he wasn't saying the Ottawa police force was negligent. He wasn't impugning any wrongdoing at all. But he did say, from the people he talked to in confidence, in camera, that he was of the view that it could have the appearance of a lack of independence, and because of that, he has agreed and suggested and is supportive of the fact that the OPP is doing work on this.

I don't think it would be right for me at this particular time to reach into that work. I don't think that would be appropriate. But it is important that the work of the Ottawa Police Service be reviewed, and I think the OPP are doing that. They are a responsible group of people, and I think they will do it effectively. We'll look for the outcome.

• (1550)

**The Chair:** Very briefly, Mr. McGuinty.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Very briefly.

Minister, to clear the record up, the author of the report, Mr. Brown, stated categorically the OPS investigation was not independent. He spoke not about appearance or perception, he said it wasn't independent.

Finally, could you help Canadians understand why they should have more confidence now in punting this issue to the OPP and having them conduct such an investigation, when we know that the track record here, as illustrated by Mr. Brown, is hardly comforting in terms of the way it was done on the inside, at the RCMP? Why should we, why should Canadians, accept that punting it to another police force is going to solve this problem?

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** The RCMP, in the first case, were investigating themselves. In the second case, as this moved along, it was the Ottawa Police Service. Let's be fair to what Mr. Brown said. He did not in any way suggest that there was wrongdoing on the part of the Ottawa Police Service.

We've already heard some suggestion today that this committee, which has done great work, doesn't have the expertise in all particular areas to dig into modes of investigation and how those are reported. I guess we could say the same thing about how Canadians have confidence that we, in Parliament, are doing things the right way. I think the proof will be in the pudding.

The Ontario Police Service will come out with the results of their work, and we will be among those who will judge that. The people will judge that. The fact that some may doubt a process should not cause that process to become non-existent; otherwise, Parliament itself wouldn't exist.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. McGuinty.

Thank you, Minister Day.

Mr. Sweet, seven minutes.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome, Minister. I have a couple of questions that only you could answer. The first one is of an international nature.

The RCMP not only has a great reputation here in Canada amongst Canadians, but also internationally. We have a number of partnerships, not the least of which is Haiti and Afghanistan, where we're training policemen.

I'm wondering, with the abundant coverage that has been applied to this issue, if you've heard from any of our international partners as to whether they have any concerns with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** I guess it could be said that that's a bit of a risky question, but I think it's a fair question. To be honest with you, early on in the process, with all of the media that was surrounding the Arar investigation, certainly, and then this one, it crossed my mind as to whether the confidence level of our allies with whom we work, especially on the security side, was being eroded in any way because of this, especially the publicity.

I do meet with our counterparts—and not only our traditional allies, the so-called 5 Eyes, people in Great Britain and in New Zealand—but whether with them or the G8 securities ministers, as I met with our counterparts there, including our Russian counterpart, I actually asked that question. But I prefaced it by saying, look, I still have absolute and full confidence in the RCMP, but I'm just wondering, you folks, you're hearing a lot of stuff, is your confidence eroded? They said not in the least, each one independently, because I didn't ask that in a really public way. I didn't hold a conference of international police forces to ask that. But they said, we understand, and no police force is perfect, but it looks like there's some pretty aggressive work going on to fix any problems. They said that operationally it has not eroded their confidence one iota and that they appreciate the ongoing work with the RCMP.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Good. Thank you.

I have another question. In your busy schedule, I understand that you're able to actually get out and visit some of the different detachments and talk to rank and file officers while you're looking after the rest of your responsibilities. I'm wondering, have they been coming back to you and telling you about their concerns about this pension scandal, and do they feel that the entire force has been tainted because of it?

•(1555)

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** One of the things I enjoy doing is stopping in not just at detachments, but even at roadside operations at various times, and not because I've been pulled over. As we all know, it's like when you go door to door in your constituencies; you're hearing from people one on one, without a filter. When I'm talking to members literally on the highways and the byways, or on the streets, or in the detachments, commanding officers aren't around, their superior officers aren't around, and they're pretty open.

One of the sentiments I hear fairly consistently is that they just want to see a system in place to clear all this, not to cover it but to clear it. It's almost universal that they recognize there were problems at the senior levels, and they have a concern. They're proud of what they do.

On Sunday, I'll be attending a service in Regina at Depot for officers killed in the line of duty, and the very next day, a graduation class. It's literally at both ends of the spectrum. For those going into the graduating class, neither the fear of literally dying on the job or the ongoing accusations that were in place before they were recruited and signed up for the class are enough to deter them from the fact that they feel called to care for and protect their fellow citizens.

So what I'm hearing from the rank and file is that they're frustrated. They want to see a system in place that deals with this kind of stuff. They are confident that the Auditor General has said, and it's been proven, that the pension fund itself is intact. The money that was inappropriately directed to other areas, to the disability plan and to the insurance plan, the \$1.3 million, has been replaced. So they're confident with that, but they do want to see this dealt with. They want to see it dealt with properly. They don't want anything covered up, and they're looking for the day when there's a structure in place that allows them to do their work without this hanging over their heads.

It's that thing hanging over their heads that bothers some of them. But they all tell me to a man, to a woman, that they are proud to serve, they love their job, and they know that, like in any organization, the vast majority of them, the huge percentage of them, are honourable and are doing things in the right and correct way, and they'll continue to do that.

**Mr. David Sweet:** I've met many RCMP officers. In fact, we just had an opening of a new detachment in east Hamilton and I had an opportunity to dialogue with them. What I'm amazed about is their embodiment of the mission vision and values: honesty, integrity, courage.

Are they saying to you, or do you have an indication yourself as the minister, that with this hanging over their heads it's impeding their job? Is it making their job untenable to do ethically and effectively on a day-to-day basis?

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** No. In terms of doing their job, they reflect positively on their training, on their desire to do a good job.

This is not partisan, but I have had a number reflect that they like the legislation we're bringing forward, things like mandatory jail terms for people who commit crimes with firearms, the ability to see the bad guys or bad girls who they go after and put in jail stay there and do fair time and not get out under the radar. There are some things with the system that frustrate them, the system that we are all responsible for, which I hope we can see changes to.

They're pleased to hear that we are going forward with our commitment for a thousand more RCMP officers across the country, which resulted in a \$37 million expansion at Depot in Regina to accommodate that. They're pleased when they see the \$64 million drug strategy that's going to put more dollars on the street for anti-drug problems, and the sexual exploitation centre, which is getting an extra \$6 million. About those type of things they say, "Good."

If they reflect negatively in a significant way, or if their frustration really comes to the fore, it's that they want to see the government clear away what are perceived to be obstacles to having people dealt with who want to hurt others. They want those people contained. They want to see recidivism rates drop. They are very much for the rights of citizens, and they are hoping to see the government working along in that direction.

I hope too, again in a non-partisan way, the Liberal Senate comes onside with some of the legislation that's being held up right now, because our RCMP officers, police officers in general, reflect very favourably on it, because it helps them do their job of keeping our country safe.

•(1600)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Sweet.

Thank you, Minister Day.

That, colleagues and witness, concludes today's session.

On behalf of the committee, Minister Day, I want to thank you very much for appearing here today. This committee, hopefully, will be reporting to government, and we certainly look forward to our future dialogues. Thank you very much again.

The meeting is adjourned.

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