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## **Standing Committee on Public Accounts**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Tuesday, March 1, 2011**

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**Chair**

**The Honourable Joseph Volpe**



## Standing Committee on Public Accounts

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•(1530)

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC)):** Colleagues, we'll call this session together. This of course is the 47th meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Today we'll be discussing and studying chapter 9, "Pension and Insurance Administration—Royal Canadian Mounted Police".

Yes?

**Mr. Andrew Saxton (North Vancouver, CPC):** Just before we get started, I'd like to raise a point of order.

The point of order is that we believe that the privilege of the committee and its members has been violated by the chair of this committee—not you, of course; the other chair. Since he is not here today, I will defer the point of order until Thursday, but I would like it to be on record that we have raised it at this occasion.

Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** On the record it is, but we're tabling, obviously, until Thursday.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Fine. Thank you very kindly.

We'll continue now. We're following up on the November 2006 Report of the Auditor General of Canada. It was the second report of the second session of the 39th Parliament.

Today we have with us, from the Department of Public Safety, the deputy minister, Mr. William Baker, and of course we have the Commissioner of Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Mr. William Elliott.

Thank you so kindly for coming in here today, gentlemen. We certainly appreciate your time, given the commitments that everyone has. I know the committee is looking forward to your opening comments, which I assume you have. Then of course we will follow with our round of questioning based obviously on information we have, and of course based on the input that you're about to provide now.

Perhaps we could then start with Mr. Baker, please.

**Mr. William V. Baker (Deputy Minister, Department of Public Safety):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's my pleasure to be here today with Commissioner Elliott to speak to you on the government's response to the committee's 2007 report, which addressed problems in the administration of the RCMP's pension and insurance plans.

[Translation]

First, let me say that I appreciate the on-going work of this committee in contributing to RCMP modernization efforts. Your recommendations, along with other input, have helped guide the reforms to strengthen the RCMP.

[English]

As you will recall, in 2007 the government established the Task Force on Governance and Cultural Change in the RCMP. The task force was created in response to a number of concerns relating to the administration and management of the RCMP. In December of that year, the task force released its final comprehensive report, with 49 recommendations regarding RCMP governance, management, and accountability.

One of the recommendations was to create a council of external advisers to oversee the implementation of task force recommendations. Consistent with this recommendation, in March 2008, three years ago, the government established the RCMP Reform Implementation Council to provide expert advice on the modernization of the RCMP.

[Translation]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** One moment, please.

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** The sound is not reaching the booth. As a result, we are not getting the interpretation.

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** We will suspend just briefly. We have some problems with translation. Please, one moment.

•(1530)

(Pause)

•(1540)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Colleagues, I think we're all back in operation now.

Yes, Mr. Wrzesnewskyj.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, on a point of order, in consideration of the fact that due to technical difficulties we've lost about 10 minutes of our meeting, perhaps we could extend our meeting for 10 minutes at the end to compensate.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** We generally don't do that. However, if you're....

Pardon?

We'll just cut the rounds down, if you'd like, all the way through. We just haven't done this in the past, and—

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** If there's consent; if not, then we'll just proceed.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Okay.

Do we have consent?

**An hon. member:** No.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Mr. Chair, can we wait until the end to see if we need it?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Wrzesnewskyj, generally we always have time-plus left over after questioning. We're generally pretty quick with this. We watch the clock pretty well. There should be some extra time, so we shouldn't be caught.

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

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Thank you.

Mr. Baker, we certainly apologize for our technical difficulties. Please continue, if you would.

**Mr. William V. Baker:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will skip some of the very beginning—the welcomes—and go more into the substance of my opening remarks, just in the interest of time.

One of the recommendations was to create a council of external advisers to oversee the implementation of the task force recommendations. Consistent with this recommendation, three years ago the government established the RCMP Reform Implementation Council to provide expert advice on the modernization of the RCMP.

The council's mandate ended on December 19, 2010. In each of its five reports, this independent council provided a largely positive assessment of the RCMP's progress on its transformation agenda. In its last report, which was publicly released in January 2011, the council stated, and I quote, that “most of the specific problems identified...by the Task Force are being effectively addressed”.

• (1545)

[*Translation*]

This is a significant accomplishment given the breadth and number of Task Force recommendations.

I would also like to add that provinces and territories who contract RCMP police services have been actively engaged in the process of modernization and have expressed their support for RCMP reform efforts.

However, today I would like to focus my remarks on the RCMP modernization efforts that have been led by my department, Public Safety Canada, in the areas of external oversight and contract policing.

[*English*]

Commissioner Elliott will speak to the transformation agenda that he has been actively pursuing within the force, including his efforts to strengthen RCMP management.

To begin, allow me to address the issue of external oversight. After extensive consultations with partners and stakeholders, including provinces and territories who contract RCMP police services, Public Safety Canada developed a legislative proposal to address the concerns raised by many groups, including those of this committee in its 2007 report.

I'm pleased to report that Public Safety Canada's work on external oversight resulted in the 2010 budget announcement of \$8 million over two years for a new civilian independent review and complaints commission for the RCMP.

It also led to the introduction of Bill C-38, Ensuring the Effective Review of RCMP Civilian Complaints Act, last June. This bill proposes the creation of a new commission for public complaints, which would replace the existing review body, the Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP.

Under Bill C-38, the new RCMP review and complaints commission would have significantly enhanced investigative powers, including the power to compel testimony and evidence. In addition, the bill provides the new commission with broad access to information needed to fulfill its mandate, including expressly providing the commission with access to privileged information where it is relevant and necessary.

To my knowledge, this sets a new precedent for review bodies in Canada.

[*Translation*]

Bill C-38 also streamlines the complaints process, and provides the new Commission with other authorities, such as the power to share information and conduct joint reviews with others, including provincial police review bodies.

[*English*]

Bill C-38 goes beyond strengthening the RCMP public complaints regime. The bill also establishes a mechanism to improve the transparency and accountability of serious incident investigations involving RCMP members. It substantively addresses the issue of who is policing the police. This includes the requirement of referring such investigations, wherever possible, to other investigative bodies, such as Alberta's special investigative response teams, and appointing civilian independent observers to assess the impartiality in cases where the investigation is undertaken by any police force.

These requirements would build upon and formalize the RCMP policy on external investigations that was announced by the commissioner in February 2010. It is expected that this and other changes will contribute to strengthening the RCMP and ensuring continued public confidence in the RCMP.

[*Translation*]

Turning now to the issue of contract policing, my department has been actively negotiating the renewal of provincial, territorial and municipal Police Services Agreements, which are set to expire in March 2012.

[*English*]

The proposed agreements include mechanisms that will significantly improve accountability and modernize the relationship between the federal government and the contract jurisdictions. As you know, we have contracts in place with eight provinces, three territories, and about 200 municipalities.

One such mechanism is the creation of a new contract management committee to provide the provinces and territories with much greater opportunity to provide input on issues that impact the cost and quality of RCMP services in their jurisdictions. These negotiations are progressing well, and I hope we will have agreements in principle with the contract jurisdictions shortly.

Before closing, I'd like to comment on the one recommendation made by this committee in 2007 that has not yet been addressed. That is the recommendation to create a police accountability board, which we have come to call a "board of management". While Commissioner Elliott may also wish to comment on this issue—and I'm sure he will—permit me to make a few observations.

As you may know, I worked with a board of management in my former role as Commissioner of the Canada Revenue Agency. The RCMP is, of course, a very different organization with a unique operating environment, and its governance framework must be considered with that in mind.

I recognize that there have been calls from the task force, the Reform Implementation Council, and many others to establish a board of management for the RCMP. Given the importance of this institution to the safety and security of Canadians, any major decision on RCMP governance can only be made after extremely careful consideration of the matter and meaningful consultations with stakeholders, including contract jurisdictions.

I'd like to underscore that given the breadth of issues on RCMP modernization that have been identified in a variety of reviews and reports, including this body's helpful 2007 report, we frankly needed to prioritize our efforts.

First, as a matter of priority, the RCMP addressed the many administrative and management issues that had been identified. The results of this initiative were recently highlighted in the RCMP September 2010 progress report entitled "Transformation of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police".

Secondly, the government focused its efforts on strengthening external oversight of the RCMP, which of course resulted in Bill C-38, which I mentioned earlier.

In addition, Bill C-43, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Modernization Act, was introduced in Parliament in June 2010 by the President of the Treasury Board, with a view to modernizing the RCMP's labour relations regime.

● (1550)

[*Translation*]

Lastly, in terms of priorities, we have directed our efforts to contract policing negotiations, which include new relationships with contract jurisdictions.

We can now properly turn our attention to strengthening the internal oversight and considerations associated with a board of management and any other related governance changes.

[*English*]

Internal governance is an extraordinarily complex issue, and it is important that we take the time to get this right for the RCMP and for Canadians. The RCMP has been developing its views on this issue. We will soon be in a position to consider the work undertaken by the RCMP, and be in a position so that I can provide advice to the minister and the government.

I would note, of course, that any decision on governance is a machinery issue that ultimately remains the prerogative of the Prime Minister.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd be happy to answer any questions after my colleague has spoken.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Thank you, Mr. Baker.

Commissioner Elliott.

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

[*Translation*]

I am pleased to be here with my colleague, Deputy Minister Baker, and I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide an update on the RCMP's transformation efforts.

[*English*]

Since the government provided its response to the committee's report of December 2007, I believe the committee has been briefed periodically on progress in addressing the committee's recommendations.

Following the committee's report and that of the Task Force on Governance and Cultural Change in the RCMP, both in December of 2007, the RCMP embarked on a comprehensive and ambitious transformation initiative.

[*Translation*]

Simply put, our objective has been to bring about positive change in the force in order to better serve Canadians and better support our employees.

I would like to highlight some of the changes we have made, including changes to improve transparency and accountability.

[English]

Let me begin by saying that I believe the RCMP is a stronger organization today than it was when issues surrounding its pension and insurance plans came to light. Much of the progress we have made is summarized, as Mr. Baker indicated, in our report entitled "Progress—Transformation of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police". I believe the Minister of Public Safety provided copies to the committee last fall.

The progress outlined in that report is in support of our vision for change for the RCMP to be an adaptive, accountable, trusted organization of fully engaged employees demonstrating outstanding leadership and providing world-class police services.

I believe this vision supports many of the principles reflected in the recommendations of the committee. For example, we created the Office of Professional Integrity within the RCMP, and appointed retired Major General Joseph Hincke as our professional integrity officer. His role is to advance ethical and values-based decision-making throughout the organization; and to oversee discipline, honours, recognition, and the application of the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act.

The Office of Professional Integrity also supports our policy on external investigations or review adopted last year to provide further assurance that serious incidents involving employees of the RCMP will be thoroughly and independently investigated. We recognize that transparency and accountability are vital to the public support on which we rely in carrying out our mandate promoting the safety and security of Canadians.

The RCMP, and I as commissioner, are very supportive of other proposed enhancements to independent oversight and review of the RCMP, including proposed legislation to establish an independent review and complaints commission, which would build on the existing Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP.

The senior executive of the RCMP and I are also on record as supporting recommended governance changes for the RCMP, specifically that the RCMP become a separate agency supported by a board of management.

•(1555)

[Translation]

The senior executive of the RCMP and I are also on record as supporting recommended governance changes for the RCMP, specifically that the RCMP become a separate agency supported by a board.

[English]

As our transformation report highlights, we have made significant progress on a broad range of issues. We have improved our performance on access to information requests; strengthened our policies, training, and reporting requirements on the use of force, notably in relation to conducted energy weapons or tasers; and introduced a new policy on the responsibility to report, clarifying and strengthening reporting requirements relating to major police incidents.

Among the priorities we have been addressing are leadership, training and development, and significant improvements in investments have also been made in these critically important areas. We have also been successful in our efforts to obtain greater authority with respect to procurement and contracting, including pursuant to the investment planning initiative undertaken by Public Works and Government Services Canada.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to refer to significant changes to both our organizational structure and the makeup of the RCMP's senior management team. We have streamlined the senior executive committee and appointed uniquely qualified individuals to our senior management team. This includes a number of new commanding officers and other senior officials in our divisions—that is the provinces and territories—and at national headquarters. The senior management team is committed to working collaboratively to create a culture of continuous improvement and to accelerate the pace and scope of positive change within the RCMP.

[Translation]

Thank you again, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to the committee's questions.

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Thank you, Commissioner Elliott.

We will now start our first round of questioning, and of course it will be seven minutes for the first round.

We will start first with Mr. Wrzesnewskyj, please.

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

Commissioner Elliott, welcome.

Commissioner, over a year ago, assistant commissioner Keith Clark, who is in charge of the change management team within the RCMP, wrote a very critical report for the team about the implementation of reforms.

Have you read this report?

**Commr William Elliott:** I cannot recall specifically whether I read that report or not.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** I would assume that your fundamental role, in being made commissioner, was to take this transition and make sure this transition occurs. This was the individual who was tasked internally.... As an assistant commissioner, he was in charge of the change management team. So are you telling me that you did not read the reports that he produced?

**Commr William Elliott:** Well, I'm sorry, without seeing the report, I can't recall specifically whether I read the report.

I work very closely with Mr. Clark, and had ongoing dealings with him throughout the period when he led our change management team. He reported directly to me. We had reports regularly at the senior executive committee from Mr. Clark. There would have been a number of reports on a variety of subjects. I just don't know about the specific report.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** Okay.

Could you table with us the reports, the specific reports that he wrote to the change management team about the status of the implementation of the changes required in the RCMP? That would be tremendous.

**Commr William Elliott:** Okay...again, I don't—

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

**Commr William Elliott:** —recall specifically. I mean, we dealt with issues on sort of an ongoing basis.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** Oh, thank you for agreeing to table them, and then we'll take a look at some of the issues that may have been raised there.

I'd like to move on to another topic.

**Commr William Elliott:** With respect, Mr. Chairman—

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** One of the—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Excuse me; the commissioner would like a clarification.

**Commr William Elliott:** —I'm not sure what it is that is being requested with respect to documentation.

I'm happy to table any relevant documentation, but as I sit here, I don't know what specific documentation there is. I will certainly be happy to table whatever relevant information there is with respect to our progress. Our progress is summarized in the report that the committee already has.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Okay, thank you.

Mr. Wrzesnewskyj, do you have a specific document that you're referring to?

•(1600)

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** Yes; I think the commissioner has actually agreed that he will table any of the reports that Mr. Clark has written for the change management teams about the implementation of reforms. There may be a number of documents, or a number of reports, and I think those will be very helpful in doing an assessment of how we've transitioned over the last couple of years.

I'd like to move on to another question. One of the most serious allegations during our hearings here in the public accounts committee was the allegation of constructive dismissals and the culture of reprisals, fear, and authoritarianism that resulted.

You said that you work very closely with assistant commissioner Clark. What role does Mr. Clark presently fulfill?

**Commr William Elliott:** Mr. Clark is currently on medical leave. Most recently he has been on full-time language training.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** Is it by his choice that at this present time he has no official duties—besides taking language training?

**Commr William Elliott:** Well, it's a requirement of his promotion to his current rank that he meet the prescribed language profile. And actually, we interrupted his language training to have him do a number of things, including leading the change management team. Our agreement with Mr. Clark from the outset was that he would do the change management team, and then he would return to full-time language training.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** So he moved on before he completed; he does not have official duties at this present time.

You said that he's on health leave. That kind of echos of something we've heard in public accounts in the past. For instance, Staff Sergeant Frizzell supposedly, initially we were told, had to leave for health reasons as well when he was conducting a criminal investigation—

**Commr William Elliott:** Mr. Chairman, I must say, I object to the innuendo and accusation inherent in the member's question.

I am not prepared to speak in detail about Mr. Clark's medical situation, but I can assure you that there is an issue there.

With respect to language training, as I said, he was promoted conditional on meeting the language profile. There is no basis to suggest that he was prematurely taken out of his position as head of the change management team. The change management team was a temporary project that ended March 31, 2010. Following that, as had been agreed to with Mr. Clark two years before, he resumed full-time language training.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Thank you, Commissioner.

Mr. Wrzesnewskyj, if you would, keep your questions to facts rather than innuendo.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** I'll move on to another topic.

In your role as commissioner during this critical transitional period for the RCMP, how often do you communicate with the Prime Minister or the Prime Minister's Office?

**Commr William Elliott:** I usually communicate with the Minister of Public Safety and his officials, the lead official being Mr. Baker.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** “Usually”, but you do communicate with the Prime Minister or the Prime Minister's Office, or you have since you've been commissioner?

**Commr William Elliott:** I am involved in briefings of the Prime Minister periodically. I sometimes, but rarely, am present at interdepartmental meetings where there are members of the Prime Minister's political staff. But I do not recall any direct dealings with any member of the Prime Minister's staff, certainly not on this specific subject.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** At some point last year, when speaking with several members of your senior management in regard to the implementation of a board of management, did you state something along the lines of, “It's not going to happen; the Prime Minister doesn't support it”?

**Commr William Elliott:** I never said that.

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

The key recommendation of our committee was recommendation number 31, and it stated:

The Government of Canada establish a Police Accountability Board that will provide third-party oversight of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

It was echoed by the Brown reports, by the task force, and in fact the Reform Implementation Council, in its last report, stated the same thing.

The first requirement is for the government to appoint—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Mr. Wrzesnewskij, your time is up. You can have a quick question.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij:** So they reinforced that.

At what point did you change your decision about supporting this board of management? You spoke about it at the Canadian Club in November of last year. Was it because the Prime Minister's Office now indicated that they would support it?

**Commr William Elliott:** At no point did I change my decision with respect to a board of management. As I've already indicated, I've had no dealings with the Prime Minister's Office on this subject. I do not believe the Prime Minister has yet been briefed in any detail with respect to the specifics of governance changes—at least not by me—so I'm not in a position to speculate on the view, or the potential view, of the Prime Minister. And that has had no role with respect to my own thinking on the subject.

• (1605)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Thank you, Mr. Elliott.

Mr. Desnoyers, please.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome to the committee. My first question deals with one of the topics you addressed in your brief, Mr. Elliott. You say this:

Among the priorities we have been addressing are leadership, training and development, and significant improvements and investments have also been made in these critically important areas.

I would like to know what that covers specifically.

[English]

**Commr William Elliott:** I would answer—if I understand the question correctly—that our overall objective is to strengthen the leadership of the RCMP, to identify people with leadership potential, and to work with them throughout their careers to develop those leadership skills.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** But why is that, Mr. Elliott? Was there a critical lack of training or leadership in the past? You mentioned significant improvements and investments. Is that linked to what was discovered on the insurance and pension systems? Have these measures corrected the situation?

[English]

**Commr William Elliott:** Well, I certainly think that given a whole number of factors, including the increasing size and complexity of the RCMP, the increasing complexity of the environment within which we work, and the demographics of the force, where a lot of people are retiring and we are having to promote people more junior in their service to senior positions, it is incumbent on us—and on any organization that wants to continue to stay ahead of the curve—to invest more in leadership and development.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** So that wasn't done to fix the problems identified in the committee's report on the insurance and pension

systems. At that time, labour relations at the RCMP were very difficult and turbulent. In fact, they were unhealthy.

It is clearly part of a bigger picture. On the labour relations side, you went through a very difficult time, and that is probably still the case. You also went through a very difficult time in terms of the pension system, insurance and accountability. You say in your brief that you have done significant work. At least that is what I understood, and I hope it is the case.

[English]

**Commr William Elliott:** Again, Mr. Chairman, I point out that investments in leadership, and in our people, are really designed to improve the organization as a whole. The specific issues with respect to the pension insurance issues arose prior to my being commissioner, prior to my being in the organization.

Certainly when I became commissioner there were lots of weaknesses that had been identified that needed to be addressed. Many of those weaknesses were identified in the task force report—that is, the Task Force on Governance and Cultural Change in the RCMP.

I would say that the investments we have made since I have been commissioner have not been specifically related to specific issues. It's really an effort by us to strengthen the management and leadership of the RCMP across the board.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** My question is for Mr. Elliott.

Mr. Baker says in his report that the board of management has not yet been set up. Is that accurate?

**Mr. William V. Baker:** That is right. The RCMP is still studying the idea and putting together recommendations for the minister.

• (1610)

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** Can you tell us what you are studying at the RCMP that might prevent the setting up of a board of management? Does it depend on Bill C-43, which deals with the unionization of workers at the RCMP? Is that hindering the establishment of a board of management?

[English]

**Commr William Elliott:** Perhaps Mr. Baker is in a better position to respond to at least part of the question.

The proposals, which I am on public record, and the senior management team, as I indicated in my opening remarks...is supporting. The general proposals are laid out in the report of the task force of December 14, 2007.

Whether or not to create a management board is not a decision for the RCMP. It is a decision of the government. It is specifically the prerogative of the Prime Minister.



[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** Mr. Baker, can you tell me why the board has not been set up? Is Bill C-43 a significant factor? In his response of November 15, 2010, the Minister of Public Safety pointed out that the government had not yet made a decision regarding changes to the management structure at the RCMP. This is because of the turbulent labour relations and the need to complete contract negotiations before being able to think about putting in place other management and oversight mechanisms.

It seems to me that it is all there. A major decision by the Supreme Court recognized the workers union at the RCMP. If these workers were unionized, a "watch dog" style of structure would be put in place, in other words, a collective agreement that would settle labour relations problems, which are difficult at the RCMP. That would solve all of the issues we heard about relating to the pension and insurance systems. Often, a collective agreement...

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Please ask your question.

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** Given the reasons that I have listed, could you tell me why the board of management has not been set up?

[English]

**Mr. William V. Baker:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As I indicated in my opening remarks, there are three points I think I would emphasize.

First of all, any decision to create a board of management for an institution of the magnitude and importance of the RCMP cannot be made easily or lightly. There has to be a very significant amount of study in terms of all of the implications.

Related to that, as you alluded to, there have been many other developments affecting the RCMP, including a bill that's now before the House on a new labour relations regime. We are in active discussions that I'm leading with the provinces and territories on contract negotiations. Included in that are their views on greater involvement in the management and the execution of those contracts for police services. There was recently a departmental audit committee set up for the RCMP that is also playing a role.

Part of it is looking at the universe of changes that are in play and ultimately assessing—it won't be my decision but the government's decision, ultimately assessing—what additional value a board might bring.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Thank you, Mr. Baker. We can perhaps have a further response on another round.

We will now go to Mr. Christopherson, please.

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

Commissioner, Deputy Minister, thank you very much for your attendance here today.

I'd like to pick up on the last series of questions, because I think it's the crux of why we've asked you to be here—namely, why is the oversight board not in place? Why aren't things happening? Why aren't there, at the very least, clear recommendations asking that this be done?

I just want to set the stage here a little bit. I hear what the deputy is saying, but some of us who have experienced these areas also see it a little differently from how others do. In a previous life, I was Solicitor General of Ontario and responsible for all the policing in Ontario. Every single municipal police service in the province of Ontario has a police services board, with the exception of the OPP. Much like the situation in the RCMP, I was the civilian head of that, and my next agenda item was to do that, but then an election came along. History unfolded a little differently, and it remains undone.

A lot of us have experience with this in communities. Those police service boards are accountable to the community, and they're accountable to the Ontario Civilian Commission on Police Services, OCCPS. They have that accountability on both sides.

Let's go back to the very beginning. I will direct this to you, Deputy.

Mr. Brown was appointed to be an independent investigator, and he said:

The powers vested in the Commissioner of the RCMP make the holder of that office much more powerful than any corporate CEO. Accordingly, the attitudes and demeanour of the Commissioner pervade the RCMP more fundamentally than would be the case in most corporate environments.

He also goes on to say that the current RCMP paramilitary governance model

is not a governance model that investors in a \$3 billion business would accept [because] a sophisticated business organization of this size cannot provide appropriate transparency and accountability within a command and control structure.

Mr. Brown then went on to recommend that a task force be created to look at this very issue further. He was appointed to be the head of that task force, and that task force—Mr. Brown again—came out and said:

Legislation should be enacted by the Parliament of Canada as soon as possible to establish a Board of Management of the RCMP responsible for the stewardship of its organization and administration including the oversight of the management of its financial affairs, resources, services, property, personnel and procurement.

We then went on to the RCMP Reform Implementation Council, which is the third step. The last report of that council said:

From the beginning, the Council has seen the introduction of a management board—a formal mechanism of external advice, oversight and guidance—as an essential aspect of successful and sustainable RCMP reform. We believe that such an improved and updated governance model will become the foundation upon which all successful reforms and improvements rest.

The cherry on the cake is that it was a unanimous report by all of us. We all agreed—even the government members—on the recommendation that Borys has already read into the record.

So across the board, everybody is saying, "Let's do this. There are good reasons. We have the experience. We have the plan. Let's do it."

We're asking you in here to tell us, why isn't it happening?

•(1615)

**Mr. William V. Baker:** Mr. Chair, I hope I don't repeat myself too much.

I've had an opportunity to read all of those reports, and I'm familiar with them. I know there is certainly a strong view in favour of the establishment of some form of board. I've read the argumentation. When I was at the Canada Revenue Agency, I was consulted on this, in fact, in terms of my views, because it is, to my knowledge, the only other federal institution that has a board of management that's shaped that way, outside of the crown sector, with boards of directors.

It is, however, a very significant decision for the government to make, and ultimately the Prime Minister to make, with respect to whether or not this will provide value. And that process is still unfolding.

I know the recommendation has been out there for several years right now, but, with respect, when you look at the change agenda for the RCMP, it has been extremely busy. There are bills in the House. There have been other reports. Contract negotiations with the provinces and territories are in full flight. As I indicated earlier, the government's priorities have been established—to get those in place first and then look at what the residual value might be of a board of management.

So we'll await input from the RCMP on this. I know that Commissioner Elliott and his team are working on this. We'll have a look at that...recommendations we've made to the government, and we'll see.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Do you have anything to add, Commissioner, before I respond?

**Commr William Elliott:** I will simply state what I have said today and have said publicly: I, as Commissioner of the RCMP, and the senior leadership of the RCMP, are advocating the creation of a board of management for the RCMP, and that the RCMP be created as a separate agency and a separate employer.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** It's a cute little performance.

I've got to tell you, Commissioner, that I hear what you're saying; you mouth the words, but then the deputy, who has to make things happen....

I've got to tell you, sir, I take your words and previous answers.... That's why we've called you in. I could set it to music. It's like dancing. I've got to tell you, right up front, what this looks like: the whole world is saying this ought to be done but there's a block somewhere.

I mean, even the commissioner is now telling us he thinks it should be done. So I don't know where the block is.

Is it you, Deputy, refusing to act on all of these good ideas? You keep saying we need to look at it more and study it more. I'm sorry, sir, it sounds like you're just delaying, delaying, delaying.

All the evidence is there. I don't understand what it has to do with labour negotiations, or negotiations with the provinces. We're talking about a macro overview board. You can still have a provincial version of that to deal with the contracts, if you wish.

I'd like to hear an answer as to how we should accept your words today as anything other than a big song and dance that's meant to delay things and basically to leave the status quo in place.

Convince me I'm wrong—please.

•(1620)

**Mr. William V. Baker:** This isn't about convincing me, and it isn't even about convincing the Minister of Public Safety. Ultimately, as both the commissioner and I have indicated, it's a royal prerogative in terms of the establishment of the machinery of government. It ultimately rests with the Prime Minister to make those decisions.

We are doing due diligence on this. Work is being done. An analysis will be undertaken. Ultimately I will be comfortable to be in a position to present the minister and the government with the assessment of this—the pluses and minuses—so that a decision can be—

**Mr. David Christopherson:** How many more years?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Your time is over, please.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** How many more years of—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Mr. Saxton, please.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks to the witnesses for being here today.

When the RCMP Act was amended in 1986, two separate agencies were created for handling complaints involving the RCMP: the RCMP public complaints commission, which became operational in 1988; and the RCMP External Review Committee, which became operational in 1986.

Can you please comment on how those two mechanisms have evolved since then, especially in light of the Auditor General's report of 2006 on pension and insurance administration? Either one of you may answer.

**Mr. William V. Baker:** I'll take a stab at that, and perhaps the commissioner can add as well.

Of course, the External Review Committee looks at complaints from staff and disputes involving staff and management. If you were elsewhere in the public service, the Public Service Staff Relations Board would concern itself with these affairs. The public complaints commission is for complaints against the RCMP by members of the public.

Since the Auditor General's report in 2006 and the deliberations of this committee, two pieces of legislation have been introduced in the House of Commons. Bill C-38 establishes the new commission for public complaints, and I'm sure members have had an opportunity to study that bill. It has far-reaching consequences in the mandate, scope, powers, and authorities, and is really designed to create a very modern, very functioning public complaints body.

Staff relations concerns are contemplated in Bill C-43, which is in the House, tabled by the President of the Treasury Board. It would establish a new labour relations regime for the RCMP. If and when that bill passes, the External Review Committee would cease to exist, because those responsibilities would be transferred to the Public Service Labour Relations Board, and in some cases there would be implications on the RCMP itself.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Thank you.

Commissioner, do you have anything to add on that?

**Commr William Elliott:** No, other than the fact that both the Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP and the External Review Committee are very busy. I think we have a mature relationship with them.

Speaking of the CPC, it has been pointed out that it does not have all of the authorities that might be desirable. Those authorities are proposed to be provided in legislation before Parliament. We're very supportive of that.

We're very supportive of strengthened oversight and review of the RCMP, including a board of management, because we think that will make us a better organization; it will certainly increase our accountability to the public; and I think it will contribute significantly to the trust Canadians place in the RCMP.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Thank you.

The Marin commission of 1976 originally recommended a single authority at the independent review stage that was referred to as the "federal police ombudsman". Why were two organizations created instead of one, as was recommended by the Marin commission?

**Mr. William V. Baker:** You're referring to the 1986...?

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** It was the Marin commission of 1976, which originally recommended a single authority.

**Mr. William V. Baker:** It was 1976. Okay. My apologies; I'm not familiar with that report.

There may be a rationale. Perhaps the commissioner can offer something on that. We'd be happy to look at the report and advise the clerk on whether that rationale was set out.

• (1625)

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Okay. Thank you.

In regard to Bill C-38, Ensuring the Effective Review of RCMP Civilian Complaints Act, could you explain how that will affect the RCMP? How will it strengthen and modernize the RCMP?

**Mr. William V. Baker:** In designing that piece of legislation, as you can imagine, a lot of work went into it. The government looked at complaints bodies that dealt with policing in Canada and abroad. Input was far-reaching to identify what the best ingredients were for such a commission. I believe that has been built into the legislation.

I think it is a very fulsome set of authorities that the new complaints commission will have. It goes far beyond the existing body in terms of the ability to compel testimony or to call witnesses. It can initiate policy reviews, which the current commission cannot undertake. It does not simply need to react to a complaint.

It can work in tandem with provincial and territorial complaints commissions as well. There's an efficiency there; as we've seen in the past, there are sometimes several reviews going on. One is handled provincially or territorially, one is handled federally, and there may be another one on top of that. So I think this is a good design that will generate, once it is enacted, a very strong and performing commission for public complaints.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Thank you.

In regard to access to information at the RCMP, what changes have been made to improve the transparency and efficiency?

**Commr William Elliott:** Mr. Chair, perhaps I can comment.

The legislation in general terms would provide to the complaints body the authority to compel evidence and to subpoena witnesses. There is a provision, as the deputy minister referred to in his opening comments, with respect to providing privileged information to the commission. It really is strengthened in the sense that they will be able to compel evidence and to compel testimony.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Thank you.

Could you quickly explain, in 30 seconds or less, how Bill C-43, the RCMP Modernization Act, will have an impact on the RCMP?

**Commr William Elliott:** I guess most fundamentally for those employees of the RCMP who are governed by the RCMP Act, and who currently do not have an avenue open to them to pursue collective bargaining, it will provide an opportunity to pursue collective bargaining and to be represented by a union if they choose to be so represented.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Thank you very much.

That finishes this round.

In order to try to get in everybody here, we're going to shorten the questioning. We're now going to drop down to four minutes.

We'll again start with Mr. Wrzesnewskyj .

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

Mr. Baker, when I finished questioning the commissioner on whether or not it was the Prime Minister who was blocking the establishment of this board of management, the commissioner stated that the Prime Minister had not been briefed on governance changes.

You clearly indicated in your opening remarks, and you repeated, that:

I would note that any decision on RCMP governance is a Machinery issue that ultimately remains the prerogative of the Prime Minister.

We have a federal institution, our federal police force, that's been terribly broken. We had over a year-long parliamentary investigation. The key recommendation was this board of accountability, of management.

The key recommendations of the task force, the key recommendation of the Reform Implementation Council, stated:

The first requirement is for the Government to appoint a board of management to provide the RCMP with a necessary external perspective on how it can best achieve its mission, to serve as a check on decision-making at the highest levels.

Everyone has said this is the key recommendation. It's unanimous.

We've heard from the commissioner that the Prime Minister hasn't even been briefed about this.

I'd like to know, do you feel that you've received direction from the Prime Minister's Office on whether or not you're to move on this? It's taken three years. Has this been an abdication of duty? The RCMP is a critically important federal institution. It's our federal police force.

• (1630)

**Commr William Elliott:** If I could, Mr. Chairman—

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij:** The question was to Mr. Baker.

**Commr William Elliott:** Yes, but if I may, I'd just like to clarify my earlier answer.

I'm not in a position to speculate on a briefing to the Prime Minister other than by me and the RCMP. So I'd like to clarify that I've not briefed the Prime Minister or his office. The RCMP, to my knowledge, has not briefed the Prime Minister or his office.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** That's fine.

The question is now directed to Mr. Baker, just to respond to Mr. Wrzesnewskij, please.

Thank you for the clarification, Mr. Elliott.

**Mr. William V. Baker:** Mr. Chair, my role as deputy minister is to work with the agencies in the portfolio and develop advice for the minister. Then, in turn, it's the minister's determination whether he wishes to sponsor an idea moving forward with the government, and in this case the Prime Minister. I do not deal directly with the Prime Minister or his office on these matters.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij:** Okay.

We have a situation where this ultimately is the “prerogative of the Prime Minister”, in your own words. So either, over the last three and a half years, the Prime Minister has abdicated in his duties to implement these changes that everyone has recommended, or perhaps blocked; there have been allegations that it's been blocked up to this point in time.

I'd like to turn to something else. You're here today to report on the implementation of the committee's recommendations.

Mr. Baker, you didn't even note the committee's recommendations. You talked about the task force; you talked about other bodies. You didn't even note the committee's recommendations.

Mr. Commissioner, neither did you.

There are 31 recommendations. Could you provide us, this committee, with...? We spent a great deal of time and tremendous taxpayer resources to try to produce recommendations that the government could act on. Could you at least provide us in this committee with a checklist? I would have thought you'd arrive here

today with a checklist saying, okay, from the 31 recommendations, we've implemented these. Obviously the most important one has to be—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** I'm sorry, Mr. Wrzesnewskij, we're out of time now, and we have no time for response.

We'll go to Mr. Dreeshen, please.

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer, CPC):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, gentlemen, for coming here today.

Basically I want to talk about some of the TBS information that had taken place in March 2010. The RCMP had received some greater authority from Treasury Board Secretariat to enable the organization to respond more effectively to the emerging priorities and better support the police operations.

I'm wondering if you could explain how this is benefiting the RCMP governance structure.

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

As I referred to in my opening remarks, we have been provided with additional authority, specifically with respect to contracting and procurement. That's as a result of our working with both Treasury Board Secretariat and Public Works and Government Services Canada.

On our authority, for example, with respect to procurement, the financial limit on procurement has been raised from \$25,000 to \$400,000. That will allow a much more expeditious management of our procurement. It will also help us to more effectively manage capital projects—for example, the building of detachments will have a long-term capital plan that will set out the specific priorities. We'll have that plan approved, and then we will go ahead and manage the procurement within those financial levels.

The proposals we are making with respect to authorities, along with the governance changes, would see further increases to our authorities, and they would see the exercise of those authorities overseen by a board of management.

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen:** Thank you. Certainly the RCMP detachments, the new facilities you have, are needed in a lot of different areas.

I wonder if you could let us know some of the improvements that were made to the RCMP systems, processes, and policies across the country, with the intent to improve service to Canadians and to assist the front-line membership.

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

We've done a number of things. Zeroing in for one moment on front-line staff, as I indicated in my remarks, we have clarified and strengthened policy. We've put in place new systems, including reporting on incidents, importantly with respect to the use of force. We have put in place policies that clarify the obligations on officers to make reports with respect to incidents.

We have developed streamlined systems with respect to them generating reports and making reports. We have a pilot project going on; it's referred to as "PAT", or the police access tool. It will be a much more user-friendly version of our PRO system, which is the daily occurrence reporting that officers make.

We've also put in place a system with respect to paying officers who are on call. We have added additional positions. We are providing new mechanisms that mean officers are on call less frequently, and they are actually being called out less frequently.

• (1635)

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen:** Thank you.

I do have one other question, then. I wonder if you could describe for us what the RCMP external investigation or review policy is that was published on February 4, 2010. Could you give us some information on that particular policy?

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

That I would describe as the RCMP getting our own act in order. Following serious incidents involving RCMP members, the public has rightly questioned this whole issue of the police investigating the police, the RCMP investigating the RCMP.

So although the establishment of independent investigative agencies rests with governments, we as the RCMP adopted a policy that requires us, following a serious incident, to refer those investigations out, firstly to the independent agencies, where they exist—and they do exist in the province of Alberta—and secondly, if there no such agency in the jurisdiction where the incident arose, to try to get another police force to take on the investigation. Increasingly, we're doing that.

Thirdly, where we're not able to do either of those two things, there are requirements with respect to bringing RCMP officers in from other jurisdictions to conduct the investigations. There are requirements for screening with respect to conflict of interest and there are provisions for the appointment of independent observers. All of this is designed to provide further assurances to Canadians that the actions of the RCMP will be thoroughly and independently investigated.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Thank you, Mr. Elliott. We're a little over time on that one now.

[Translation]

Mrs. Mourani, you have the floor.

**Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for coming today to answer our questions. I would like to ask Mr. Elliott a question, if I may. To avoid slipping up, I am going to refer to some people by name.

On February 8, a few weeks ago, Mr. Souccar met with the committee to discuss the internal conflicts you are experiencing at the RCMP. He told us that your behaviour towards several officers was disrespectful. He received complaints, not in writing but verbally, from those people. He also told us that your disrespectful behaviour had continued throughout your entire mandate. So it wasn't something new. He specifically said this: "Three years later, with nothing changed and his behaviour getting worse by the day, it

boiled over and resulted in the situation that we found ourselves in this past summer." He then added that the "RCMP needs to become better, stronger, more transparent". So that means that, for him, the RCMP is still not better or more transparent. A little farther on, he talks about a "recommendation made in 2007 by the task force on governance and cultural change in the RCMP". And he said this: "I dare say that if a board of management had been in place, this whole affair of last summer would not have happened."

If I'm not mistaken, you were appointed in 2007, Mr. Elliott. Is that correct?

[English]

**Commr William Elliott:** I was appointed in 2007, yes.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** There has been talk about labour relations problems since your arrival. Mr. Souccar said that, given the circumstances, the board that people keep talking about would have been very helpful. The board should have been in existence since 2007, but it still does not exist.

Mr. Baker, you said earlier that the government was expecting recommendations from the RCMP. If I'm not mistaken, you have been waiting for recommendations for almost three years. What we are talking about here is a typical case that a board of management could have resolved.

Mr. Elliott, I admit that I do not understand. You went to the RCMP supposedly to bring some additional transparency and respect, but at the end of the day, we have heard that your behaviour was not consistent with those values. Mr. Baker has told us today that there is still no board of management that can resolve situations like the one involving Mr. Elliott.

• (1640)

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** An opportunity to respond....

**Commr William Elliott:** Okay. Well, there's a lot, Mr. Chairman, in that question.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Yes.

**Commr William Elliott:** I would start by saying that I agree with some things Mr. Souccar told the committee. I agree with Mr. Souccar's suggestion that the RCMP would be better off if we had a board of management.

I frankly do not agree...I frankly disagree with a number of things that Mr. Souccar alleged. I would point to the workplace assessment that was done following complaints being made, and the conclusions of that assessment, which indicated—as I testified and as a number of members of the senior executive committee testified—that yes, there were difficulties, difficult relationships, at the senior executive of the RCMP. Some people supported my approach. Some people did not—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** I'm sorry, but we're over time on that. I know that you certainly want to respond to these allegations. Perhaps there will be more rounds of questioning. Please feel free to respond to the previous question at that particular point.

**Commr William Elliott:** Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** We'll now go to Mr. Young.

**Mr. Terence Young (Oakville, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

My question is for Mr. Baker. The modernization of police services is a huge challenge. My understanding in your situation with the RCMP is that it's because of the many provincial partners that contract the services, but also, we didn't talk yet today about technology. It's not just vehicles, the cars, and the helicopters, but you have weaponry to deal with, operating systems, two-way radios, and all of that.

Can you describe how the contract management committee is going to help control both the quality of the services that are provided and the cost?

**Mr. William V. Baker:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The existing contracts with the provinces, territories, and municipalities have something referred to as a contract advisory committee. We have been working with the provinces and territories to put in place a much more significant capacity for provinces and territories to have a say in the functioning of these contracts. These are big contracts. They're expensive for provinces and expensive for the federal government and they cover 20 years.

The discussions around the contract management committee—there have been many and I've had the opportunity to participate myself in many of these—have focused on how we can make sure that key decisions around the functioning of the RCMP in those jurisdictions, the costs, because the provinces and territories bear 70% of the costs, as well as the overall plans moving forward, and that they know what those plans are..... They have an opportunity to provide input and at times directly to the commissioner or whomever so their considerations can be fully taken into account. So for example, on the area of accommodation, which is probably a very good one, detachments, housing, and everything in that jurisdiction... a chance to see what the capital plan looks like and a chance to have input into the design of these buildings, and making sure the costs are reasonable as well. We're all trying to contain costs at a time of restraint.

As well, we're also building mechanisms for dispute resolutions, should we actually arrive at that.

**Mr. Terence Young:** So it's almost like co-management?

**Mr. William V. Baker:** I wouldn't call it co-management because there is an implicit recognition that this is a single institution, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The commissioner has to have the management authority to run that institution. But I think we've gone a significant way—and I think the provinces and territories would agree—in providing a meaningful opportunity for them to have a say.

**Mr. Terence Young:** Thank you.

Again, this is for Mr. Baker. Policing is not a business. We have front-line officers. Your front-line staff are officers. They carry weapons. They often work under short periods of tremendous stress and then for hours of sometimes dull routine. That's unique in your operating environment, so can you tell us what else is unique that makes the governance such a great challenge?

●(1645)

**Mr. William V. Baker:** First of all, if you look at all the institutions of government, there's nothing even similar to the RCMP, so we have to look at it on its own merits in terms of the proper governance arrangements. Certainly, you've already alluded to one of the big ones, that is, this is a service provider to eight provinces and three territories that have a responsibility for policing in their jurisdiction.

We need to look at governance arrangements that suit the needs of provinces and territories. There are unique operational challenges in the RCMP. Policing, as you alluded to, is a very dynamic field today with respect to new technologies, the evolution of criminality in this country, the way organized crime is evolving, and so on. There are many different dimensions there, all of which you'd have to consider in establishing the right sets of authorities in governance structures around the forces.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Thank you.

That's it, Mr. Young.

Mr. Christopherson, please.

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

First, I'd like to ask if the analysts, in preparation for when we're report-writing, would be good enough to give us a briefing note on the issue that the deputy has raised. In his remarks, he said, "I would note that any decision on RCMP governance is a Machinery"—that's with a capital—"issue that ultimately remains the prerogative of the Prime Minister". Could they delve into that for us and give us a bit of a legal briefing as to what exactly...?

I'm not questioning your veracity, sir. I just want to understand. Is that the only way? What does that mean exactly? What are our alternatives? That's what I'm looking for.

Here's where I'm having some difficulty. So far, virtually everyone who has touched this, whether it's us as parliamentarians, independent investigators, councils, task forces...all have unanimously said, including the commissioner of the RCMP—and if I'm putting words in your mouth, Commissioner, please correct me, and I know you will—that a third party oversight body is something that would be good for the RCMP and we ought to do it. If we're at that point, then that kind of leaves you, sir, sitting there somewhat isolated, in my eyes.

I want to understand. What is it that you need that you don't have today to make this a reality? Is it a direction from the minister and/or a direction from the Prime Minister? Is there something else? What exactly, sir, do you not have right now that you need in order to create this? What are the impediments to your getting that directive? What's stopping it?

We seem to get to you, deputy, and up till then everybody is on side, and then the support just falls off. I'm wondering, what would it take for you as a deputy to be given the direction to do this?

**Mr. William V. Baker:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Two things. One is, I could join the chorus of support for a board of management, but it's not my decision. We have to understand that it's not the minister's decision. It is the Prime Minister's decision. I'm pleased you're asking for some work on that. But that is a well-established prerogative of the Prime Minister—

**Mr. David Christopherson:** I'm sorry. Would that be the answer, then? Would that be the short answer?

**Mr. William V. Baker:** No. I wanted to give you a second part to the answer. That is, before I can give my minister advice on something as significant as the establishment of a board of management for the RCMP, having a recommendation or even support...it doesn't really matter how many organizations or people or time, we have to do due diligence on that. We would need a compelling rationale that considers all of the pros and cons, transitional considerations, costs and so on, before I could fulfill my duty to the minister in terms of providing him with advice or even suggesting to the minister that it's time to sit down with the commissioner and me and other officials to discuss it. That due diligence process I am responsible for, and I must insist that that is in place.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** It sounds to me, in my words, like you're willing to absorb a few blows here for the boss somewhere.

Here's my difficulty. You say you need a compelling rationale. We have all kinds of compelling rationale, sir. We also have the example of the Toronto Police Service, which, unless things have changed, is one of the top three largest police services in the entire nation. We have a similar oversight body with CSIS, which deals with all the spying and secrets. I don't understand what the delay is.

• (1650)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Your question...?

**Mr. David Christopherson:** My question, then, is that I'm taking from this that you're ignoring everything that has been done and you have to be personally satisfied before a recommendation goes to the minister. All the work that we did means nothing and that only your advice to the minister will actually make this happen. Is that correct?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** I'm sorry. We're out of time now.

**Mr. William V. Baker:** Mr. Chair, very briefly, of course the views of the public accounts committee and others matter. It's all input. It's important input, but—

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Three years—

**Mr. William V. Baker:** —ultimately I need to have the time and the space to be able to put it all together and make sure that I'm giving the best advice I possibly can to the minister.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Thank you, Mr. Baker.

Mr. Shipley, please.

**Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My thanks to the commissioner and to Mr. Baker.

Just for some background, could you give us an idea of the size of the RCMP? What are we talking about? A few thousand people? A few hundred people? What are the assets in terms of buildings and

their locations? Are they just in Ottawa or are there main buildings all around...? Maybe you could help us with that.

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

The RCMP today is an organization of some 31,000 employees. About two-thirds of those employees are police officers—in round figures, 20,000. About one-third, or 10,000, are civilians, either civilian members of the RCMP or public servants. We provide services across the country from about 800 locations, about 750 detachments.

We do international policing, federal policing, and provincial and territorial policing, and we also provide services to all police forces in Canada, services such as, for example, CPIC, the criminal records database, the DNA database, the fingerprint database. We run a college here in Ottawa for advanced training and development.

We are a very large, very modern police force, really in every jurisdiction and in some 26 countries around the world in consulates, embassies, and high commissions, and we also participate in international peacekeeping efforts in places today, including Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, Afghanistan, and Haiti.

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** I have some great organizations in Ontario that actually came together. These are agricultural organizations. It took them four years. They all use the same equipment. They all use the same technology. They all use the same harvesting.

It took them four years, but actually in the end they did it right, and now it's a very successful organization. I guess I'm always cautious about “well, three years”, and that's why I wanted to get a bit of a grasp—I think everybody should have that—on the magnitude of the services you provide.

With that, changing that, taking that authority... Help me understand the board of management. I'm assuming we're working basically on a principle.

Mr. Baker, you're waiting for due diligence to come to help make some recommendations and directives on that. Is this an administrative change, something that's not a very significant change to the RCMP if it were to happen, or is it something of a larger magnitude to go to a board of management?

**Commr William Elliott:** I believe it would be a very significant change. It would certainly be a change that would have to be implemented over a number of years. In and of itself, I don't believe governance changes will immediately significantly change the RCMP, but I do think that a board of management and separate employer status or separate agency status would be both an enabler and a catalyst of positive change, and it certainly would increase transparency.

But we would envisage that this would be done by way of legislation and, following the legislation, you'd have the appointment of a board, and then you would sort of develop policies and put in place all of the component parts of the newly defined organization over a number of years.

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** I think you've answered the question, and I appreciate that, because when you're making that significant a change in a process, you actually want to make sure that you're going to be doing it right and that you have the policies and regulations in place.

Mr. Baker, when would you be expecting to get some sort of direction in terms of your due diligence and recommendations?

•(1655)

**Mr. William V. Baker:** Mr. Chair, as the commissioner—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Actually, just a brief response, please.

**Mr. William V. Baker:** The commissioner, having declared himself in terms of the interests of him and his organization, I understand that the RCMP itself is putting a case together for this. We're awaiting that. Once we receive that case, we will have to do the necessary sort of scrubbing and analysis. Part of my job is to ask the hard questions as well to make sure that we've got a good package for consideration by the minister and ultimately the government.

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** That's it. Thank you.

Mr. Bains.

**Hon. Navdeep Bains (Mississauga—Brampton South, Lib.):** Thank you very much. I'll be sharing my time with Mr. Wrzesnewskyj.

I just want to follow up on the question asked by some of my colleagues here today, which I think is a very important issue, and I'm actually genuinely frustrated now because I don't understand how we can proceed like this.

We are talking about third party oversight. There seems to be unanimous support for it. There have been three years of reports and task forces, as Mr. Christopherson has mentioned. We've examined this issue every which way possible, and you now mention that you need to do further due diligence.

It just boggles the mind. What other due diligence is required? Could you elaborate on what that due diligence is? What else remains? And what is the associated timeline with that due diligence? Because I think we need to now have a perspective on when we can see results, as opposed to going in circles, which seems to be the case.

**Mr. William V. Baker:** Mr. Chair, the first order of business is of course getting the material from the RCMP. I will need to take the time, and I'm not sure how long that time will be, and I cannot and am not going to box myself into a time corner, because we do other things in life as well, and I want to make sure.... This is a significant enough issue that it requires some of my personal attention on this. But I would need to take the right amount of time to have a look at it, ask the right questions with my colleagues, and then ultimately find some time to have a discussion with the minister on this.

**Hon. Navdeep Bains:** So no timeline? You're—

**Mr. William V. Baker:** I can't commit to a timeline because I can't commit the minister, I can't commit the central agencies, and I could not commit the Prime Minister—

**Hon. Navdeep Bains:** [*Inaudible—Editor*]...the first component was the RCMP, putting together this report three years after the fact, but there seems to be a fair amount of unanimous consent on this. Does the RCMP have any timeline associated now with what the deputy minister has recommended, what he needs to proceed with this?

**Commr William Elliott:** We have developed a comprehensive business case that we will be bringing forward in the very near future.

**Hon. Navdeep Bains:** You will be bringing it forward when...?

**Commr William Elliott:** In the very near future.

**Hon. Navdeep Bains:** Okay.

Borys.

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

Mr. Baker, has the Prime Minister at this time given a clear directive to form a board of management? My understanding is that has not occurred.

**Mr. William V. Baker:** I'm not aware of any direction coming from the Prime Minister or the Prime Minister's Office, and I'm quite certain that the central agencies are aware of the work that is going on in the RCMP—

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

**Mr. William V. Baker:** —and that ultimately they will see that.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** Yet you've stated over and over that this is the Prime Minister's prerogative. It's the Prime Minister. The buck stops with the Prime Minister. It's his decision. If he had decided three years ago, based on all the recommendations of the task force, of the parliamentary committee, to implement this board of management—we've heard that it might take a couple of years to implement—do you think that if he had done this three years ago, we'd have one today, a board of management?

**Mr. William V. Baker:** I wouldn't speculate on the timeframe. I think it's easy to underestimate. I have direct experience with this at the Canada Revenue Agency. The time it takes to actually shape these things, come up with the detailed planning...you've got to admit that this is easier said than done. We have an RCMP with a commissioner in charge of the organization reporting to a minister. There is a relationship to the department. There's a Treasury Board. There are central agencies and so on.

When you insert another piece of governance, and that's exactly what this is, because no one else goes away.... If you insert another piece of governance, we have to think very thoroughly and clearly about the implications in terms of the authorities of the minister, the Treasury Board, and so on. That's part of the work that has to be done.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Thank you.

Mr. Saxton, please.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First of all, Mr. Elliott, you wanted to respond to Mrs. Mourani's earlier question. I'd like to give you the opportunity to do that now if you wish.



**Commr William Elliott:** I'm appreciative of that. I'd like to state for the record that I certainly believe in the importance of being respectful and encouraging frank discussion and debate. I believe we have been very successful in the RCMP, in the senior leadership of the RCMP, in doing just that.

On the occasions where that debate has not been perceived as respectful, I have expressed my apologies. I do not accept the characterization that the committee heard from Mr. Souccar and Mr. McDonell, and I would point out that the committee itself heard contradictory testimony from Deputy Commissioner Killam when he was here.

Thank you.

• (1700)

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Thank you, Mr. Elliott.

Earlier, I brought up the Marin committee report of 1976. One of the reasons I brought that up is to highlight that the recommendations of that report didn't actually take effect or get implemented until 1986 and 1988, 10 to 12 years after the report was published. I just wanted to ask, is it normal that it takes this length of time to make adjustments of this type?

**Commr William Elliott:** No, well, certainly I think that it does take time, and I must say that it's not as if we haven't done anything. We have been very busy in bringing about positive change in the force. There is certainly a long list of things that we have accomplished. Mr. Baker has referred a number of times to the legislative proposals that are before the House. We have worked with the Reform Implementation Council and we have worked with others in developing detailed proposals. But I agree wholeheartedly with the deputy minister: this is very complicated and it's a lot easier said than done.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Thank you.

No further questions.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** We will now go to Mr. D'Amours, please.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Elliott, you referred to the near future. What does the near future mean for you? You stated that you could provide Mr. Baker with the information he needed in the near future.

[English]

**Commr William Elliott:** I think, Mr. Chair, that there are some issues with respect to how it is things work. Part of—

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** Mr. Elliott...

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Excuse me. Let him answer first, and then you can have a—

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** Mr. Chair, this is my time.

[English]

It's my time. I can use it the way I want.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** No, excuse me. You will not. I'll rule you out of order. We will have a quick response, and then you can ask your question.

We'll have your response, please.

[Translation]

**Commr William Elliott:** By the end of the month.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** Thank you. That was easy.

This issue was the subject of a study that lasted three to four years. Three to four years later, there is still no board of management. So it has been talked about for seven years.

If this had happened in a private business, there could be two possible explanations: it could have been due to the incompetence and complacency of employees, who would have ended up being fired, or it could have been because those in charge wanted to block the process. There would have been an explanation one way or the other. A private business would not wait seven years to implement something that was essential and that everyone wanted; everyone meaning the Department of Public Safety, the RCMP and Parliament.

How long will this take, 10 years? Had there been a desire to do due diligence, it would have to have started well before the final report was, in order to figure out how the department would respond and how the RCMP would follow up. Seven years later, Mr. Baker, you are telling us that you still have several points that need verifying, and that you need time before you come up with a recommendation.

Are the committee members being taken for fools? Are parliamentarians being taken for fools? Do you take us for fools?

It's simple. If this kind of system is going to take 10 years, should we just draw a line through it, draw a big X on it, and start another project three years later?

No matter how you look at it, this will have taken 10 years. It's shameful. That would not have been acceptable in a private business. It's all very well to say that the RCMP has its unique characteristics. The Canada Revenue Agency also differs from other agencies, and many other organizations are different. However, it is unacceptable that this has taken so long and that so little has been done—so little. It is unbelievable.

I will end with that. If you would like to respond, go ahead. If not, then do not. I repeat that this is a shameful situation.

[English]

**Mr. William V. Baker:** Mr. Chair, I have to register that I take the deliberations of the public accounts committee now—and I always have in my career—extraordinarily seriously. This is important input by parliamentarians. To attribute the fact that we need time as somehow a condemnation of the work of this committee is not correct at all.

I have a job to do and I need to take the time to do that job properly. This is a big decision. I cannot send a half-baked recommendation to the minister and expect him to send that on to the central agencies and so on for the government for consideration. This is not the private sector.

• (1705)

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** Mr. Baker, why did you not demand that the RCMP provide you with information earlier?

Why are you before us today, three or four years later, telling us that nothing has been done because you have not yet received the documents from the RCMP?

Why did you not tell the RCMP that you needed its recommendations, not yesterday, not the day before yesterday, but a long time ago?

Why did you not decide to work on this issue three years ago? That is when you should have demanded those recommendations from the RCMP. Taking three to four years to deal with a file is unacceptable.

**Mr. William V. Baker:** Mr. Chair, I respect the RCMP commissioner. In my opinion, it is essential to have his point of view before beginning my own work.

[English]

This is out of absolute respect for the RCMP. This is a governance arrangement that will affect that institution. I must hear from them first, as should the minister. To me, it's the proper and correct thing to do.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Thank you very much, Mr. Baker.

Now we'll go to Madame Mourani, please.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Baker, did you ask the RCMP for their opinion on this? Did you make that request?

[English]

**Mr. William V. Baker:** No. This idea of a board, as we acknowledged, has been around for a few years. Late last year, when the commissioner indicated publicly his support for it, we had some discussions and concluded that, well, before we could take that idea any further, we would need to do a comprehensive analysis of the pros and cons.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** Why did you not make that request? The committee tabled its report in 2007, three years ago. Why did you not put a request in to the RCMP if you were waiting for recommendations?

[English]

**Mr. William V. Baker:** You know, we shouldn't assume that nothing has happened in the last three years. We had a Reform Implementation Council that worked for three years. Its mandate only ended in December. We received its final report, which was

made public in January. That was critical input and an important element in providing information for our consideration.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** Mr. Elliott, during your time with the RCMP, during those three years, did you not think to give Mr. Baker your recommendations on this?

[English]

**Commr William Elliott:** Mr. Chairman, as I indicated in my opening remarks, following the receipt of the task force report we developed a comprehensive and ambitious transformation initiative. We have been very busy. We have been doing....

We set priorities. There were some very pressing, urgent priorities. The first and foremost was to address issues relating to recruiting and vacancies—

[Translation]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** No. My question is the following, Mr. Elliott...

[English]

**Commr William Elliott:** —and we've had huge success in doing that.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** Mr. Chair, I would like him to stop repeating himself; I have already heard this.

[English]

**Commr William Elliott:** We have a very detailed work plan. I am—

[Translation]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** No. Stop repeating yourself, Mr. Elliott, please.

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Madame Mourani, please.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** My question...

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** No, no; let the witness finish the response—

[Translation]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** Mr. Chair, he is not answering my question.

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** —and then you can ask for another response.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** Could he please answer my question?

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Please finish your response, but briefly. Thank you.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** Could you please answer my question?

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Madame Mourani—

[Translation]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** Why did you not give...

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** —please wait for the response. Then you may ask another question.

A brief response, please.

**Commr William Elliott:** Mr. Chairman, we have worked on a wide variety of fronts, including on this file, but we have addressed other priorities.

It is a complex matter. We have been working diligently on that. We worked with the Reform Implementation Council. In November I stated my public support for the proposal. We are working on the details, including some of the things that Mr. Baker talked about with respect to finances and implications more broadly, and an implementation plan.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** Thank you, Mr. Elliott.

[English]

**Commr William Elliott:** So we have been working diligently, Mr. Chairman, on this issue.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** Thank you for repeating yourself a third time.

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Okay.

Carry on.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** Mr. Chair, we are sharing our time.

I have a question for Mr. Baker, that has actually already been asked. There is currently discussion about modernizing the RCMP. There is talk of a new external complaints commission. There's talk about a board of management. There is also talk of making the police accountable and implementing new governance.

Do you have an action plan dealing with everything that has, and has not, been resolved, since the committee made its recommendations? I would also like to know how everything was done.

Do you have that report and could you make it available to us?

• (1710)

[English]

**Mr. William V. Baker:** Certainly. The vast majority of the recommendations that came out of this committee—I did allude to that committee's report when I commenced my opening remarks today—relate to the internal functioning of the RCMP. The commissioner is in the best position....

You asked earlier for an update on the recommendations, and I'm sure that can be provided in due course, certainly.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** Mr. Chair, I don't mind who answers. What we want, what the committee wants—I am certain—is an action plan showing what remains to be done and what direction will be taken, what has been done and how it was done.

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** And the timelines.

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** And, of course, the timelines.

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** When will you, let us say...

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** Mr. Chair, it's a simple question.

[English]

**Commr William Elliott:** Perhaps I could just ask for clarification, Mr. Chair.

The report that's being requested—is that in relation to the December 1, 2007, report of this committee?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Mr. Desnoyers, please be explicit in your request for the report.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** The committee's report contains a series of recommendations. The Bloc Québécois members of the committee had included a minority report.

You have both referred to the modernization of the RCMP and a new commission, but nothing has happened yet.

I am putting the question to you both. Could you please give us an action plan showing how you will resolve the outstanding issues over the coming weeks? Could you please tell us how the other issues were resolved?

[English]

**Commr William Elliott:** Mr. Chairman, I think in the interests of time I should indicate that my understanding is that the recommendations of the committee have all been addressed. The only outstanding issue really is with respect to the recommendation for an accountability board—in the words of the committee.

I had thought the committee had been provided with details of the action on those recommendations, which we also treated as a priority, by the way. I'd be happy to provide further information with respect to the specific action that's been taken with respect to each of those recommendations.

With respect to the outstanding recommendation about governance, the committee has heard today that we will provide information to Mr. Baker and then the matter will proceed. Ultimately, the government will decide whether they want to make a decision or not make a decision, and what the nature of any decision they wish to make will be.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Thank you. I appreciate the clarification, Commissioner Elliott.

Mr. Marston, please.

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's a pleasure to be here.

Coming from another committee—this is the first time I've subbed in this committee—it's a little intense, but I must say that there are a couple of gaps. The comparison of 1976 to 1986, the implementation of the other plan previously, and putting it into the context of the changes that have happened since then with computer modelling and other efforts that can be made....

I'm not second-guessing the work that either of you gentlemen have done on this, but Mr. Elliott, you referred to a business plan a little while ago that was going to be presented in due course. It seems to have created a little bit of tension in the following questions. Within reasonable expectations, when would that be presented?

**Commr William Elliott:** Well, Mr. Chairman, I already indicated that we'll provide that to Mr. Baker before the end of the month. The timeframe with respect to what happens after that is really a decision of others.

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** Well, that's fair.

Mr. Baker, upon receipt of this report, in your expectations of the handling of it, at what point in time would this surface in a way that this committee would be made aware of it?

**Mr. William V. Baker:** Really, in terms of when the committee would be aware, I can't speculate, Mr. Chair. I can tell you that once we receive the material from the commissioner—and this would not be a memorandum, this would be a significant body of work I expect—

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** I understand that.

**Mr. William V. Baker:** —we will need to take the time to go through that. There will probably be some questioning back to the RCMP to get better information so that we have as full a package...in my experience, that type of exercise would probably take more than a couple of months.

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** That's fair. At least it has a kind of frame that we can put around it now.

There have been implications in some of the questions asked here...potential interference or foot-dragging and a number of things like that. Has there been any political interference of any kind? In fairness, to allow you the opportunity to disclaim it, because that's kind of been inferred in some of the questions here, at any time has anyone put up roadblocks or interfered in any fashion?

• (1715)

**Commr William Elliott:** My answer to that question is no.

**Mr. William V. Baker:** I would have the exact same response, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** So what we're really saying here is that what we're going through at this point in time is almost due process, except for the changes that were happening within the RCMP and that have overloaded your office, from the sounds of things, to the point that it has delayed the progress on this.

So if we're going to be receiving something in three to six months, I think that's almost reasonable. I'm not so sure that the members of the committee would agree with me, but being the new kid on the block, that's the way I see it.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Thank you for your courtesy, Mr. Marston.

We now will go to Mr. Shipley.

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Marston, for your bit of logic that's come into the committee.

We hear comments that there's so much time and so little to do; in my mind, it reflects the lack of understanding of the magnitude of what we're trying to do to make a significant change in terms of the management and the oversight of such a significant force. It doesn't mean that there shouldn't be, but I can tell you that I would want to be one, as an elected person, as all of us are, one of 308, that when we have that oversight and when we make those changes, as they're phased in...not whether we do it or not, yes, but actually that the phase-in is properly phased and that all the things at the end of the day are good for Canadians, and more importantly, good for the RCMP and those officers who are responsible for our safety and the safety of this country in terms of their jurisdiction.

**An hon. member:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** I take offence, actually, to some of the aggressive comments about so little to do, understanding very much about it...so thank you so much for giving clarification in terms of the timelines.

I do want to go back. On the report that came out, in terms of the main report, it was 10 or 12 years to bring in. Does government move slowly? Yes, sometimes in terms of business, it does, but in this particular case, this is a huge change.

I just want to switch gears, if you don't mind. I'd like to go back to the task force a little bit. On July 16, 2007, the Minister of Public Safety brought in the creation of a five-member task force to provide advice in strengthening the accountability and the governance of the RCMP. The report on the governance and the culture change was released I think in December 2007. The release, then, has been out that would report a number of changes, hopefully that have maybe enhanced policing programs as well as service to the employees. It is two-pronged, from my understanding.

You've had the opportunity now to have some time on the evaluation of that. I wonder if you could speak to the strengths, the positive things that may have come out of that, and maybe even speak to any weaknesses or things that maybe need to continue to be addressed.

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

The Reform Implementation Council reported in each of their five reports that significant progress has in fact been made in addressing the recommendations of the task force and other issues as well. In fact, there were 49 recommendations, and we have actioned 46 of those. One recommendation we did not accept and the other two were the governance recommendations we've been talking about this afternoon.

As I said, there's a wide variety of progress. The best sort of picture of that progress is the transformation report that I referred to in my opening remarks and that has been made available to the committee. We're a much stronger organization than we were, but we have lots and lots of things still on our to-do list.

I think the proposals that are already before the House with respect to strengthening oversight and review are very important. I would like to see action on the governance proposals. That will require us to develop a whole suite of new policies that can be tailor-made to the realities of policing and the realities of the RCMP, as opposed to the RCMP being bound by policies written for the whole federal public sector.

• (1720)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Thank you.

Now we'll go for one minute and one minute, and then we'll close off.

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

It has been made clear that it's the Prime Minister's responsibility to act on this recommendation of board of management accountability. The Reform Implementation Council, which he appointed, stated that it was their first, primary, and most important thing that they'd like to highlight. They stated, "Indeed, the difficulties encountered by the senior leadership of the RCMP in recent months make us all the more convinced of the need for such a mechanism—an independent body that works in good faith to push, prod and challenge the Force constructively...".

It's almost a cry for help, as diplomatically as they could word it. We've seen over the last few months the terrible cost to the RCMP in the upper echelons—good men and women in the RCMP paid a terrible cost—because this has not been acted on. We know clearly from everything you've stated that it's the Prime Minister's role to make this decision. The decision hasn't happened. The buck stops with him.

Let me just make a final point on why this is so important. In a democracy, it's critical that there not be political interference in our federal police force, or vice versa, and we saw during the last election campaign what happened when the commissioner—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Mr. Wrzesnewskyj, you're out of order. We will not accept allegations at this particular point. If you have a closing comment, please make it.

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj:** It's critically important that there be a board of management in place so that never again do we see such an abuse of police powers as we saw during the last election.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Thank you very much.

Mr. Dreeshen, please.

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I actually would like to comment on what Mr. Marston said.

I do appreciate your demeanour. What we've heard here today is not what you would typically hear in public accounts: pointed but respectful discussion.

I would really like to thank you gentlemen for coming here today. Really, when we look at some of the different types of recommendations and look at what was presented, we know you've said that everything that came from the Auditor General's report has been addressed. There are a few issues of concern here. I really would just like to compliment you on what you have done.

I wanted to talk to you about the RCMP Reform Implementation Council and the expert advice. Perhaps you could just close on some of the things you've heard in that area.

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

Certainly we've worked very closely with the Reform Implementation Council, and actually, our positive dealings with the Reform Implementation Council are part of what has led me to believe that the RCMP would benefit from the advice of a board of management.

I spoke as recently as today with the former head of the Reform Implementation Council, and just with respect to an earlier comment, I don't believe that his position is that...the premise of the honourable member's question, or the assertion, is well founded.... He believes, as I do, that where problems arise, they would be resolved more expeditiously if we had a board of management. I reject categorically a number of the assertions made by the honourable member.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** Thank you very much.

In closing here, let me just say to our guests that obviously we all recognize that public safety really is the cornerstone, the very foundation of a nation. When we look around the world, we can lament maybe some of our misgivings or maybe inadequacies that people may perceive we have. But collectively, when we view the world, certainly globally, and do an honest comparison, quite frankly, I think we're honoured and privileged and pleased to live in a such a society where public safety plays such an important role that is respected by so many people.

Certainly on behalf of the committee, we thank you for coming here today on behalf of your respective authorities: Mr. Commissioner, on behalf of the RCMP, and Mr. Baker, certainly on behalf of Public Safety. Thank you very much for coming here today and giving us some insight as to the dilemmas we face and the response to the Auditor General's comments.

Have yourselves a good day, all.

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

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp):** The meeting is adjourned.





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