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Chair

Mr. Kevin Sorenson

Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC)): Good afternoon, everyone. This is meeting number 38 of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, on Wednesday, November 3, 2010.

Today we are continuing the study of issues surrounding the security at the G-8 and G-20 summits. As our witnesses in the first hour, we have, from the Ontario Provincial Police, Larry Beechey, deputy commissioner, traffic safety and operational support; from the Toronto Police Service, Chief William Blair; and the commanding officer of the G-20 investigative team, Detective Sergeant Gary Giroux. As well, we have with us Kevin Gagnon, who is appearing as an individual.

Our committee thanks each of you for being with us today and for taking the time to appear before our committee. I understand that a number of you have brief opening statements to make before we get into the questions from our committee.

We welcome you here today. On our order paper, we have a list of the order in which we want to go.

Mr. Beechey, would you mind beginning? Thank you.

Deputy Commissioner Larry Beechey (Deputy Commissioner, Traffic Safety and Operational Support, Ontario Provincial Police): I'd like to thank you for the invitation to speak to the committee today in relation to the OPP's role in supporting security for the 2010 summits.

I was the executive lead for the G-8 and G-20 summits for the OPP and part of the executive steering committee for the G-8 and G-20 during the operation.

The security operation put in place for the G-8 summit was the largest ever undertaken in the history of the OPP. It is our opinion that through collaboration and extensive planning with our security partners, a successful security operation was delivered as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Following the announcement in June 2008 that the G-8 summit would be held in Huntsville, the OPP began preliminary security planning. In January 2009, the OPP dedicated five members to the RCMP-led integrated security unit, located in Barrie. By the time the summit happened, that number had grown to 109 members.

These members were deployed in a number of functions, such as: operational command, which included project management and communications; planning functions, such as community relations,

crime, prisoner processing, marine, site operations, and traffic management; logistics, which oversaw human resource mobilization, assets, telecom, information technology, and vehicles; finance; and as well, our joint intelligence group.

Many working relations in the ISU had already been forged during previous major events. The highly collaborative atmosphere within the ISU allowed many issues to be addressed during the day-to-day discussions. A clearly defined organizational structure based on the incident management system also facilitated collaboration across disciplines and agencies.

During the planning stage, a formal interoperability group was established, involving senior agency leads from all ISU security partners. The establishment of joint operational planning groups further drove the integration.

During the G-8 summit security operation, the OPP deployed a total of 2,488 members in the following functions: site operations, which included interdiction zones in the Town of Huntsville, proactive and reactive patrols, surveillance zones, and infrastructure protection; traffic operations in and around the summit and the major highways; crime management, including proactive and reactive teams, forensic identification, and prisoner processing; the community relations group, including community outreach; specialized field resources in the matter of public order units, tactical response units, aviation services, canine and underwater search and recovery teams, crisis negotiation, tactical emergency medics, obstruction removal, and CBRNe; marine operations; logistical operations to support our members in the field; public affairs and communications; intelligence operations; and our command and control.

The OPP was part of the unified command centre in Barrie, which provided strategic level coordination between the G-8 and G-20 theatres of operation. At the operational level, the Muskoka area command centre was the primary operational command centre for the OPP's G-8 operations. The M-ACC, as it was called, was also a unified command structure involving the three key agencies in G-8 security: the RCMP, OPP, and Canadian Forces. The M-ACC included command/coordination leads for each of the major functional units reporting to the OPP operations commander.

The OPP commenced their security operations on the morning of June 23, going through the evening of June 26. During this time, the majority of our security forces were deployed 24/7.

There was minimal protest activity in relation to the G-8 and there were no G-8-related arrests. There were some challenges we had to deal with relating to getting our internationally protected people from Muskoka to Toronto with the air bridge, as we had to make some amendments to our security operation.

I can tell you on behalf of the OPP that if anything had happened to disrupt the summit meetings in Huntsville, we were fully prepared to handle it.

● (1535)

We were also prepared to assist, and did so, during the G-20 summit. With the exception of the 400 series highways, the OPP generally had a preplanned supportive role in G-20 security operations, involving functions such as the motorcades, route security, marine operations, and command and control.

In closing, I'd like to comment that, as a provincial police service, the OPP has a long history of supporting as well as relying on other police services throughout the province to ensure public safety. We believe that the operations delivered in support of the 2010 summits stand as a solid example of strong integration and collective efforts in securing these meetings.

I'd like to thank you once again for being able to come here to speak to you today about our role.

Thank you.

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

We'll move to the next person on the order paper, Mr. Kevin Gagnon, who is appearing as an individual.

Welcome.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Kevin Gagnon (As an Individual): Thank you for having me here today. My name is Kevin Gagnon. I am a biochemistry student at the Université du Québec à Montréal. I went to the G20 meeting to protest peacefully for the environment because the future of our planet is something that concerns us all.

I never would have believed that I would be arrested that weekend. I would have believed even less that I would end up being charged with conspiracy. Being before you today to tell this story seems unreal to me. I still cannot believe that it happened.

I was arrested around 9:00 when I was asleep in a gymnasium with about a hundred other people. When I woke up, police officers were jumping over my mattress. They pointed their guns at me and yelled at me in English not to move. I was not yet fully awake and I was completely traumatized. The arrest took about four or five hours. No one read me my rights during that time. It took about three hours before I was able to go to the toilet. When you get woken up that way, you need to go to the toilet, you really do.

I was then driven in a paddy wagon to the temporary detention centre. The trip took an hour and a half. Other people told me that, for them, the trip was three hours. The police holding them put the heat right up instead of the air conditioning, for fun.

I noticed several things when I got there. First, in the cages, there was a toilet open and in plain view to anyone passing by. There was

no toilet paper. So it was not uncommon for people the detainees to have to wipe themselves with sandwich wrappings that were lying on the floor. I saw that a number of times. I did not do it myself.

In the 18 hours following my arrest, I was given only a sandwich and a glass of water. I was in handcuffs for about 15 hours. The first time my rights were read to me was 16 hours after my arrest. After that, I was told that, if I answered some questions, I would be let go. I had my two bags with me and I was really thinking that I would get out.

A higher-ranking police officer took my file, looked at it and whispered something to the other officers. Instead of being let go, I was strip-searched. The two officers who did the search apologized, told me that it really was unwarranted and that they wanted to get it over with as quickly as possible.

I was then taken into another room and I asked once more if I was going to be able to see an investigator soon. They said yes, but, as I waited, I had to give them my shoes, my belt and my glasses. I was taken into another cage. There I really got worried.

In that cage, I saw detainees who were really panicked; we were told nothing. We did not know what was going to happen to us, we had not been read our rights. Theoretically, we had none. We were not given the right to a phone call or anything. I saw people scratching their arms with the end of a zap-strap in order to write a lawyer's telephone number. We were not yet at 16 hours, and things had come to that.

As a number of people have described, it was really cold in the cages at the temporary detention centre. It was so cold that we really thought we were going to go into hypothermia. Detainees had to huddle together to keep warm; after a while, there was no choice.

It seems to me that, if I had been a police officer, I would have taken the initiative to bring blankets or something—the budget was \$1 billion, after all. We got a lot of homophobic comments from the police officers, both male and female. They laughed at us, because we were a bunch of guys huddled together.

A few hours later, three jumpsuits, the orange prison jumpsuits, arrived for seven people. So we had to take turns wearing them, but no one wanted to take my suit because I was so frozen.

In the morning, a rumour went round that the UN was coming to inspect the facility. Suddenly, the temperature went up. A police officer came to see us, we mentioned that the temperature was going up and he told us that they had shut off the air conditioning. He seemed to be mocking us a bit.

●(1540)

Afterwards, I kept asking every police officer who went by—and there were a lot—if I could see an investigator. I was never able to explain myself. When they came to get me, I was taken somewhere else to be fingerprinted. When I arrived in that room, there was a line of people waiting to have their fingerprints taken. I got the impression that it was a central booking area. I did not know if they intended to do a blacklist, but, at that point, I really would have liked to be able to explain to an investigator that I was no threat to anyone. Unfortunately, I never got that chance.

After that, I went off in a paddy wagon again, under the same conditions. You really feel claustrophobic in a paddy wagon, which is just a metal box. The trip to the cells at the court took a very long time again.

After being under arrest for 32 hours, I was finally able to speak to a lawyer. When I appeared in front of her and she saw the condition I was in, she started crying. When your lawyer starts crying, it is not a good day. Honestly, I did not know what was going to happen to me. I broke down in tears too; I was in a complete panic. We talked and I left.

The officers who took me back to my cell hurled a bunch of insults at me. They said that we *Frenchies* should have stayed at home. They accused me of being a member of the black block and told me that they had pictures to prove it, pictures of me smashing things. I told them I had had nothing to do with things like that, but they kept on all the same.

Around 9:00 p.m., I was finally able to go before a judge. She looked at me and said that she had been working since the morning and that she wanted to go home to bed. She told us to come back the next morning. Then the person I was handcuffed to and I looked at her and said that we would be sleeping in a cell again. After that, we were put in a paddy wagon once more and taken to Maplehurst Prison. That had to have been another couple of hours, at least. It was very cold in the paddy wagon.

When we got to Maplehurst, I was strip-searched twice in an open cubicle, in full view of all my cellmates. They gave me a tuberculosis test, although I had refused. I said that I did not want anyone injecting me with anything. Anyway, I did not understand why I was being formally processed into the prison since I was supposed to go back to the court in the morning. So I refused the test, but they said that they would give me the injection by force if necessary. They also took my orange prison jumpsuit away. I started to get cold again, even though the temperature at Maplehurst was a little better. We had to sleep on a cement floor again. “Sleep” is the wrong word because we only had three hours and we had all been cold from the time we had been on our feet. I did not sleep, anyway.

My hearing was scheduled for 9:00 a.m the next morning. I was supposed to be back in court, but I got there around noon because there were not enough paddy wagons to take us. My lawyer was not able to find me in the prison cells all day. She tried everything she could. But I was there. How is it possible for the police to lose track of me? If they couldn't find me, shouldn't they have sounded the alarm because a prisoner was missing?

I went before the judge around 7:30 p.m. I was released under strict conditions, like having to leave Toronto within 24 hours. When I got back to my cell, one detainee had completely lost his mind. We had not slept for 55 hours. He did not know where he was and was completely disoriented. Nothing he said made sense. The rest of us tried to keep him calm by telling him that he was going to get out. But we were afraid for ourselves as well because we knew that we were close to cracking.

I got out around 11:00 p.m. when the paperwork was ready. The police forced me to sign a bail document. It contained errors, one of which was my address, though one of the conditions was to provide a correct address. They just said:

●(1545)

[English]

“Just sign the fucking paper or I will put you right back in jail”.

[Translation]

When I got out, I had no wallet, no money, no shoes, no glasses, no cellphone and no keys. I was in a city that I did not know. I could not read the street names. It was 12 degrees outside and I was in a T-shirt and pants that were falling down because I had no belt. I had 24 hours to leave Toronto and to get my personal effects that, supposedly, were 45 kilometres away.

If people had not come to get me that evening, I would have been arrested again.

[English]

The Chair: How much more do you have? We're well over 10 minutes now.

Mr. Kevin Gagnon: I need only two more minutes.

The Chair: Well, you've got one.

Mr. Kevin Gagnon: Okay. I'll do it fast.

[Translation]

If people had not come to get us, I am sure that I would have been arrested again. The next day, I got another little present from the city. My personal effects were not at the west detention centre as I had been told. They were lost.

I can tell you that 62 hours is like a long week at work, including overtime. I went through it all in one go and I was not able to sleep all that time. The conditions were appalling.

I am really upset that I was denied the presumption of innocence and that I was never able to meet with an investigator. I lost four months of my life, I lost a relationship. It affected my studies and it prevented me from working.

Now that it is all over, I demand that a public enquiry be held. Hundreds of people went through what I went through and I feel that it is important that they be heard.

Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll now move to Chief Blair, please.

Chief William Blair (Chief, Toronto Police Service): Good afternoon, Chair and members of the committee.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to come before you to speak today.

I am the Chief of the Toronto Police Service. The Toronto Police Service was a member of the integrated security team, which has already been articulated to you by Deputy Commissioner Beechey. I won't repeat his explanation about how that operated.

I have come before you today to give you the opportunity to ask me any questions with respect to the operational policing decisions that were made in the city of Toronto over the course of the entire G-8 and G-20 summits events.

During that time, responsibility for policing the city of Toronto was—and it remained—the responsibility of the Toronto Police Service in partnership with members of the integrated security unit. We saw ourselves as possessing three responsibilities.

The first responsibility was public safety: the safety of our citizens and the maintenance of public peace and the rule of law to prevent crime and to protect our citizens.

In addition, we also shared responsibility with our summit partners to protect the summit site, to facilitate the movement of internationally protected persons and other summit participants throughout the city, and to work generally to maintain the safety and the security of that site.

Finally, a very significant responsibility for the Toronto Police Service was the facilitation of lawful, peaceful protest. Over the course of the 10 days of the summit event, there were many protests that took place in Toronto that were lawful and peaceful. We were able to work with the people who had organized those events to maintain a peaceful environment so that people could come forward, express their political dissent, express their opinions, and exercise their democratic rights.

Unfortunately, as the week progressed, and on Friday evening in particular, we saw a greater threat emerging from within those lawful peaceful protests.

Mr. Chair, I have brought some images here today that I think may be of assistance to members of this committee. I know that you have heard testimony about and many references in the media and from others to the black bloc. With your permission, I thought it might be of value to you to see some images of the black bloc as it presented itself in Toronto.

• (1550)

The Chair: Thank you, Chief Blair.

Can you display the pictures and then explain what you have there?

Chief William Blair: Yes. I'll offer a brief explanation because I know that you want to get to your questions.

On Friday afternoon, there was a demonstration that left from Allan Gardens, which is located in the area of Carleton Street and Jarvis Street in the city of Toronto. It moved west across Carleton Street and College Street to the front of police headquarters. As that

protest group moved across College Street, a group within this group donned black disguises, and there were others who were masking as well.

If you get a closer view of these pictures, you can see people masking. You can see how, in the larger protest—a protest of some 3,000 to 5,000 people—a group formed within that group and was donning disguises. From that group, a number of objects began to be thrown at my police officers. There was, frankly, a very real apprehension of a breach of the peace, and we had to bring in public order officers to maintain order.

On Friday afternoon we were successful in preventing this particular group from within the protest from launching a criminal attack on the city.

On Saturday, we were confronted with a greater challenge. On Saturday there was a protest that was organized primarily by the labour movement and the Ontario Federation of Labour and that exceeded approximately 10,000 protesters. They were very cooperative with us. They worked very collaboratively in helping us marshal and rally their event. As we moved around the city with that event, what emerged from within that group were several hundred individuals who obviously did not have the intent of engaging in lawful, peaceful protest, but rather had the intent of trying to penetrate the perimeter site of the summit and to engage in criminal behaviour.

With our public order officers, we prevented their penetration into the summit area, and unfortunately, they turned their criminal intent toward more vulnerable targets. They ran away from our police officers, who were positioned and deployed to protect the summit site, and they began to charge across Queen Street and up Yonge Street. I think you are all familiar with the images of members of that group who were smashing windows, burning cars, looting stores, and generally causing a great deal of mayhem through vandalism and violence in the city of Toronto.

We began to take the steps necessary to contain that threat. Over the course of that weekend, the criminal conspiracy to commit criminal acts did not end on Saturday afternoon, and it did not end when they left Yonge Street. It continued. We were gathering intelligence and information from within the crowd, and we had other sources of information that made it very clear to us that the criminal intent of the people involved in those criminal acts continued throughout the weekend.

Our ability to continue to police lawful, peaceful protests was, quite frankly, compromised by the actions of those who instead undertook the actions of a mob and engaged in criminal acts. Decisions were made by our operational commanders and by our major incident commanders that it was necessary to disperse those crowds to prevent a breach of the peace and, if the crowds refused to disperse, to take persons into preventive detention. And that did take place over the course of the weekend.

I want to tell you that since that event a number of reviews have been taking place that I think will be helpful for this committee to understand. First, on the Monday following the summit event, the Toronto Police Service announced that we would be undertaking and completing a Summit Management After Action Review Team report. That report is in its final stages of draft. When it is completed, it will be presented as is appropriate by me, through my civilian oversight body, our Police Services Board, in order to explain to my board—to which I'm accountable—the operational decisions and tactics deployed in that particular event and to provide information about them.

In addition, we have in Ontario a legislative process for the oversight of public complaints against the police. It is headed by the Independent Police Review Director, Mr. Gerry McNeilly. I understand that approximately 280 complaints have been received by Mr. McNeilly. They are being investigated by his office. He has also announced that under section 57 of our Police Services Act, he will be conducting a systemic review of the policing of the summit event. This is his legislated responsibility in Ontario.

In addition, our Ontario Human Rights Commission and the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario are able to address any human rights complaints that are brought forward.

We also have a special investigative unit in Ontario that is an independent investigative body whose responsibility it is to conduct investigations in any matter in which a person experiences serious injury or death. Those investigations are conducted independent of the police. There were five such investigations being conducted by the special investigative unit and we are waiting the outcome of their reports.

• (1555)

My Police Services Board is fulfilling its responsibility and has announced that it is conducting a review of issues with respect to governance, communication, and police deployment. Over the course of the summit event, they have engaged with retired Justice John Morden in order to conduct this review. The Toronto Police Service is cooperating fully with Justice Morden and with all of the aforementioned reviews and investigations that I've mentioned.

In addition, the Province of Ontario has appointed retired Chief Justice Roy McMurtry to conduct a review of the Public Works Protection Act, a piece of provincial legislation that was relevant in the policing of the summit.

In addition, the Ontario ombudsman has announced that he is reviewing the process by which the Government of Ontario passed a regulation. Pursuant to the Public Works Protection Act, there are a number of civil processes currently under way, including class action lawsuits. Many of the complaints will be dealt with not only through the aforementioned processes but through our civil courts.

Finally, there are a significant number of criminal trials that are currently under way because of the work of Detective Sergeant Giroux and his team, which you'll hear about shortly. They have identified a significant number of people who were responsible for much of the criminality that occurred in the city of Toronto during the weekend of the G-20 summit.

I'll be happy to answer your questions.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Chief Blair.

We'll now move to Mr. Giroux.

Det Sgt Gary Giroux (Detective Sergeant, Toronto Police G20 Investigative Team, Toronto Police Service): Good afternoon. My name is Detective Sergeant Gary Giroux. I'm the operational case manager of the G-20 investigative project team that was formed on June 28, 2010, as a result of the criminality that took place within the downtown core of the city of Toronto.

The mandate of the project team is an offender-based criminal investigation with regard to the G-20 related criminality that took place within the city of Toronto on Saturday, June 26, 2010. All of the prosecutions are based on identification of the offender by still photographs and video or witness testimony.

To date, we've received 40,000 still photographs that were provided to the investigators by private citizens and by undercover police officers within the crowd to assist us in our investigation. We've received 500 videotapes that were taken by the public and were provided to us for our assistance. Citizens within the city of Toronto and the greater Toronto area provided statements to the police with regard to the criminality they witnessed while present at the G-20 demonstrations.

In addition, we have 22,000 hours of closed-circuit cameras that were positioned in the downtown area of the city, 22,000 hours of closed-circuit cameras that recorded the criminality that took place on that particular day. We had aerial support from planes and helicopters from a variety of policing agencies. We had surveillance cameras that were provided to us by private businesses and office towers in the downtown area.

Some of the offenders who committed these offences, including arsons, were wearing no disguises at the time of their offence.

Others—several hundred black bloc individuals who wore dark clothing and disguises—transitioned throughout the downtown core breaking windows. They clearly came to the city of Toronto with a clear agenda to damage property. These individuals are in addition responsible for assaulting citizens and police officers and burning and destroying a number of marked uniform police cars. The dollar value on June 26, 2010, is estimated to be in excess of \$2 million.

As a result of the tremendous support from the public, the masked offenders were followed and tracked through the crowd until their disguises were removed—in essence, their “de-blocing” tactics. At that time, there were photographs. With the assistance of the media and the release of these photographs, those offenders have been identified, and a number of them are in custody.

The arrests that my project officers have made have taken place within the city of Toronto and the greater Toronto area and in numerous other parts of the province of Ontario, the province of Quebec, and the province of British Columbia. Some of the offenders were arrested prior to the violence that took place on June 26, but were arrested in other offences related to the G-20. At the time, the Toronto police already had their photographs for comparison purposes for the criminality that took place on Saturday, June 26.

To this date, there have been 37 arrests, many of them of black bloc offenders. There have been 131 criminal charges laid to this point, including arson, assault, mischief, mischief endangering life, and assaulting police officers. The majority of the offenders, during their interrogation and when confronted with the physical photographic evidence, go on to confess to my investigators with regard to the criminality that they participated in.

To this point, arrest warrants and extradition orders will be sought for three American citizens who participated in over \$500,000 worth of damage. All three of them are members of the black bloc. Their offences total over 100 criminal charges. They're all American citizens. These offenders are all known and they will all be apprehended.

One of the offenders, who lives within the greater New York area, attacked the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce while armed with a miner's pickaxe, striking windows 20 feet high, for a total damage of \$385,000. The damage took less than 30 seconds to commit.

The Canadian Bankers Association has offered assistance with regard to facial recognition software. It will be instrumental in a number of the most serious offender prosecutions. These prosecutions have dedicated crown attorneys who have carriage of all of my G-20-related criminal prosecutions, and many of the crown attorneys will be seeking penitentiary sentences for these offenders.

Numerous offers of assistance from other policing agencies within Ontario, Canada, and the United States have been provided to my officers. Additional arrests are pending. The investigation is active and ongoing.

Thank you.

•(1600)

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

Indeed, thank you to all our guests for your opening statements.

We'll move to the first round with Mr. Holland for seven minutes, please.

Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses.

My questions will centre on the gap, if you will, that exists.

There's a number of processes, and Chief Blair, you've outlined a number of the processes that are looking into some of the matters the committee has been hearing about, but there is no federal review of the role of the federal government. In fact, the Toronto Police Services Board, through its chair and I believe also through resolution, has identified a number of gaps where they don't feel the questions have been answered with respect to federal responsibility.

The first thing I want to understand is how you were engaged. Then I'm going to move to trying to understand chain of command and how decisions were made.

On how you were engaged, when were you first notified that the G-20 would be coming to Toronto?

Chief William Blair: We had indications that a G-8 was going to take place several months prior to the event. We knew that if the G-8 took place anywhere in Ontario it was likely going to result in protests in the greater Toronto area. This has been the experience with other G-8 or G-20 events: the protestors tend to come to the large urban centre nearby. So we had some reasonable apprehension.

So we began when the announcement of the G-8 was made. I don't have a precise date, but I think it was probably about 18 months in advance—at least in the summer of 2009. We began working very closely with the RCMP, with the OPP, and with our other policing partners in preparation for that event.

I assigned, in November of 2009, a number of my senior personnel to act and to work as part of the planning team. We received some indication that a G-8 and G-20 might be held in Ontario. I don't have a precise date for you—I apologize, Mr. Holland—but I did receive a visit from Mr. Ward Elcock, who came and spoke about the possibility of holding a G-20 in Toronto and asked a number of questions about our logistic capacity to police such an event with our policing partners.

•(1605)

Mr. Mark Holland: Do you recall, generally speaking, when Mr. Elcock would have visited you?

Chief William Blair: Generally, sometime between November and January, and I can't provide you with a precise date today. I can determine that because it will be in my calendar, but I don't have it with me today.

Mr. Mark Holland: Perhaps you could follow up with the committee on that.

Chief William Blair: Certainly.

Mr. Mark Holland: So Mr. Elcock basically asked you a few logistical questions and then presumably went away. When was the next contact you had from the RCMP or from the federal government?

Chief William Blair: We were in constant contact and we were working very collaboratively with the RCMP, the OPP, and our other policing partners in preparation for a G-8 and, quite frankly, in anticipation of a G-20. At the first indication that a G-20 might take place in Toronto, we began planning for that eventuality.

You can un-plan those events if a decision is made to not hold them there, but there is a lot of work to do, quite frankly, to get ready for a security event of that magnitude. So we began our planning and some communication within our own city to explain to people what the impacts of such an event might be.

Mr. Mark Holland: Okay. I guess here's my question, because we heard from the mayor of Toronto that he learned that the G-20—and I'm talking specifically of the G-20 here—was going to be coming into Toronto literally moments before it was announced by the minister.

I guess what I'm trying to establish is that if the city of Toronto wasn't consulted around where the G-20 was going to happen and where it was going to be placed, how much was your office engaged in this? In other words, how much was it just told to you that “here it is, deal with it”, and how much was a negotiation? What I'm hearing you say is that the first you heard of it was maybe the January before the summit. That was the first that you had heard of the possibility—

Chief William Blair: We began planning for the possibility.

We were not part of the decision-making on where the event would take place. But once the decision was made on where the event was to take place, we became very engaged in planning for the security of the event at that location.

Mr. Mark Holland: But you were never consulted as to where in Toronto would be a good place to hold it, as an example, or how the security would unfold if it were to happen there?

Chief William Blair: I think it may be unfair to suggest that. Certainly even in my conversations with Mr. Elcock we talked about the logistics of holding an event in Toronto. We did talk a little bit about locations and where the hotels might be located—for example, where the media might be located.

Mr. Mark Holland: But as I understand it, you had general conversations around logistics. It was never consultative over whether “we should put it here” or “we should put it there” or—

Chief William Blair: We were not directly involved in the decision as to where the event should take place, but when we were advised where it was taking place, we were well along in planning our processes.

Quite frankly, there are only one or two places in the city of Toronto where such an event could take place, so we had a reasonable apprehension of where it was likely to be and began planning for that.

Mr. Mark Holland: I know that the mayor of Toronto suggested that the city was left in the dark with respect to many of the security decisions. Is that a feeling you share? Can you say as you were moving forward on security decisions whether you shared the mayor's sentiment on that?

Secondly, can you run me through how exactly the chain of command worked? The chair of the Toronto Police Services Board said, “I do not believe that we yet have a full and complete understanding of the decision-making process and the governance structures that were in place” for the G-20. He goes on to say that it remains unclear how much influence the integrated security unit led by the RCMP had over local policing decisions and that this created a grey area over exactly who was accountable for certain orders.

Do you share those feelings? If so, can you—

Chief William Blair: First of all.... You've asked me a couple of questions, Mr. Holland. On your first question, I believe that we were involved in those security discussions. I did not feel left in the dark. As we became aware of the event, we were working very

closely with our policing partners and with the RCMP. We had senior personnel on the planning team of the integrated security unit and in the planning process right from the outset.

On what was transpiring at a political level, quite frankly, I'm not involved in, but in the planning and preparation of security...the timelines were tight, but I did not feel we were being left out or kept in the dark in the preparation of those events. My people were in those processes and we were fully participating.

• (1610)

Mr. Mark Holland: I'll come back to the second question in a second, but if I can, I will add this to it, because I know I'm running out of time. Normally with a process of this nature, this large.... You said that you knew in about January that the G-20 was coming, in around that timeframe, which is only several months before the event. Normally—if you could add this to the other question—how long a lead time would you like to have in order to be able to plan properly?

Chief William Blair: I'd like to have a huge amount of lead time, sir. There's—

Mr. Mark Holland: Well, what would be normal?

Chief William Blair: —a great deal of work to be done.

Mr. Mark Holland: What would be normal in this sort of circumstance—

Chief William Blair: There is no normal in this.

Mr. Mark Holland: —given other jurisdictions?

Chief William Blair: This is the first time we've policed an event of this kind, but usually in preparation for a very large-scale event.... I know, for example, that the planning for the Olympics, for that event—and that was a sports celebration—took place over a period of about four years. Now that probably would be a reasonable expectation, but.... Certainly the timelines, the planning lines, were tight, but we were working through them as quickly as we could.

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

Ms. Mourani.

[Translation]

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

Thank you for coming to testify, gentlemen.

Mr. Gagnon, could you clarify something in your testimony for me? Do you still have charges against you or were they dropped?

Mr. Kevin Gagnon: They were dropped on October 14.

Mrs. Maria Mourani: So there are no longer any charges against you.

Mr. Kevin Gagnon: Right. Everyone in the gymnasium had the charges against them dropped.

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Okay.

You mentioned getting an injection or having a tuberculosis test. Did the person who gave it to you say that it was a tuberculosis test?

Mr. Kevin Gagnon: It's starting to be some time ago now.

I recall being told that it was a tuberculosis test, that I had to take it and that I could not refuse.

Mrs. Maria Mourani: But you specifically said that you did not want the test.

Mr. Kevin Gagnon: No, especially since I had not been to court yet. I thought I at least deserved to go to court once before people started injecting things into my body.

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Mr. Blair, I have some questions for you.

I have met a number of people who were arrested during the G20. Others have contacted me by phone or email. A number of them believe that your officers thought that martial law was in effect. When some of the detainees asked them, they replied pretty much that, because of martial law, they could do what they liked, that there was no need to see lawyers or that they would be the ones deciding when the detainees could see one. People have told me that.

Did you tell your people that martial law was in effect and that the rights of citizens were suspended when they were arrested?

[*English*]

Chief William Blair: No. Let me be very clear.

First of all, every police officer who was working on the G-8 and G-20 summit sites undertook training on the limits of their legal authority. It was about six hours of classroom training and then a full day of practical training to ensure every officer knew the limits of their authority. There was no period of time where any such thing as martial law was declared. In fact, we ensured that all our officers received training.

Now, if there are complaints about the individual conduct of police officers in any capacity, then those complaints are most appropriately brought forward to the Office of the Independent Police Review Director, who has a legislated responsibility to investigate those complaints, and there is an accountability for the police through that process.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Okay, I understand, but let me tell you frankly about my own modest experience as a researcher. This is not the first time I have been involved in studies and research. Here is our premise: when 40 or so people who do not know each other tell you the same thing, perhaps there is an element of truth to it. When people come and consistently tell me the same things and those people do not even know each other, I begin to wonder.

Perhaps I would not have asked the question if I had received a complaint about one or two police officers, or 10 officers. But people are telling me about systemic problems. I have been told about systemic problems at the temporary detention centre for which you first responsible. For example, people had no right to see a lawyer. It could take 16, sometimes 24 hours before they saw someone. The

people were not questioned, which is very strange. They got a disgusting cheese sandwich to eat after about eight hours, and questionable water to drink. They had to relieve themselves in chemical toilets in full view of everyone and with little or no toilet paper. There were no pads for women on the pill who were menstruating because the pills had been taken away.

There is a lot of information reported by a lot of people. My impression is that the detention centre was poorly organized to handle the number of people you arrested.

• (1615)

[*English*]

Chief William Blair: First of all, the Office of the Independent Police Review Director is conducting a systemic review of a number of complaints, including a review of the prisoner processing centre.

I viewed that facility. We also invited representatives of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, and our Office of the Independent Police Review Director to review the facilities. As well, we allowed the press to come in.

There were video cameras in the prisoner processing centre every 10 feet because we had a reasonable expectation of complaints that would come in. I have over 3,000 hours of videotaped evidence of what actually transpired inside the prisoner processing centre, which will aid the Office of the Independent Police Review Director in coming to an accurate determination.

I can tell you as well—

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Are you telling me that these people's allegations are wrong? Let me give you a simple example, since we do not have much time. Is it true that people had only a sandwich to eat every eight hours? Let's just talk about the toilet paper. Did people have toilet paper so that they could use the toilets—in full view of everyone? That's a simple example.

[*English*]

Chief William Blair: The toilets that were installed are exactly according to the standard established for every provincial institution for the holding of prisoners awaiting court. It was actually not run by the police; it was run by my court security people, who process prisoners each and every day. The facilities, the cells that were constructed for this event, and the temporary prisoner processing facility were exactly according to provincial standards.

Let me also tell you that in this facility there were, as prisoners were brought in and processed, medical facilities made available. If anyone had a medical complaint, there were medical personnel on site. There were legal aid people on site. There was a large room filled with—

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: But, Mr. Blair, some people have told me that were not able to see a doctor. People with diabetes could not get their insulin. Some people had psychotic episodes, since they did not have their medication. I do not understand. We really have two stories here.

Given the time I have, I will come back to the issue of detention centres. But I want to bring up one particular point. The photo...

[*English*]

The Chair: Actually, Madame Mourani, excuse me. You were right. You don't have time. Your time is up. You're over seven minutes.

Mr. Davies, please.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Thank you.

Chief Blair, I take it that you would agree with me that your job as the chief of police of Toronto is to uphold the law.

Chief William Blair: Yes.

Mr. Don Davies: And you would also agree with me that the law that you're sworn to uphold includes the Constitution of this country?

Chief William Blair: Absolutely.

Mr. Don Davies: And part of that Constitution that makes up our law that you're sworn to uphold is the Charter of Rights and Freedoms?

Chief William Blair: Yes.

Mr. Don Davies: I think you also would agree with me that police are supposed to be accountable for their actions to the public and to the politicians as well.

Chief William Blair: I think the police must be accountable and are held accountable in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Don Davies: I think in your statement that you made in an interview with Mr. Steve Paikin you said you wanted to make sure "that innocent people are not victimized" as part one of your role's duties for the G-20.

Chief William Blair: One of my duties is also the protection of the public.

Mr. Don Davies: Fair enough, and what about making sure innocent people are not victimized? Is that part of your role as chief of police?

Chief William Blair: That's correct.

Mr. Don Davies: You've heard the testimony of Mr. Gagnon. I've had a number of students come to see me who told me that in the University of Toronto grad gym, in the early morning, over 70 to 100 people—I can't really get a square number—were awakened by police barging in with their guns drawn. They kicked them in the ribs. They loudly proclaimed that all of them were being mass-arrested for conspiracy. There was no evidence whatsoever of any conspiracy, since every single person in that room had their charges dropped.

They tell me that they had their hands zap-strapped behind their backs and were led out. Just before they got outside to the media, the

zap straps were taken off and they were put in handcuffs to be paraded in front of the media. Then when they got onto the buses, they had the handcuffs removed and zap straps were put back on.

I take it you'd agree with me that since none of those people were convicted of anything, they were innocent people who had their charter rights violated.

• (1620)

Chief William Blair: A decision was made to take those people into custody. It was based on reasonable and probable grounds: evidence that the police had available to them that caused them to believe these people had been involved in a crime. They were arrested for that purpose.

A decision was subsequently made—for reasons I do not question—by a crown attorney not to proceed with those charges—

Mr. Don Davies: Sir—

Chief William Blair: — so I will agree with you that they are innocent of all charges. But the courts determine guilt or innocence. The police have to act on reasonable and probable grounds and a reasonable apprehension that the crime has been committed, and that's what took place in this case.

Mr. Don Davies: Right, well, if police arrest 70 people claiming they have reasonable and probable grounds and 70 out of 70 people have their charges dropped at the first appearance, that would cause me, if I were chief of police, to have some serious doubt about the exercise of discretion by my officers who thought they had reasonable and probable grounds.

Chief William Blair: Again, this is also the matter of—

Mr. Don Davies: Do you have that concern?

Chief William Blair: Well, let me tell you what I do agree with, if I may. I have reviewed the circumstances of that arrest. I have discussed with the Ministry of the Attorney General the legal reasons for why those charges were not proceeded with. I don't disagree with the determination made by the Ministry of the Attorney General.

At the same time, I am aware of the circumstances that led to the arrest of those individuals, and I believe that the officers were acting properly.

Mr. Don Davies: Well, let me—

Chief William Blair: If there are, I would—

Mr. Don Davies: Who, Chief, made the decision to burst into that gym and arrest those 70 sleeping students? Whose decision was that?

Chief William Blair: The investigators who were investigating that case. I must tell you that it's a very complicated case involving a great deal of evidence, which I'm not going to be able to disclose and discuss with you here today.

Mr. Don Davies: Can I get—

Chief William Blair: But I can also tell you that—

Mr. Don Davies: Can I get the names of the investigators who made that decision, Chief?

Chief William Blair: I'm sorry?

Mr. Don Davies: Can we have the names of the investigators who made that decision?

Chief William Blair: I don't have them with me today.

Mr. Don Davies: Could you undertake to provide that to the committee?

Chief William Blair: Yes, by all means.

Mr. Don Davies: Thanks.

Now, in terms of accountability, I also understand that a number of police had their name badges covered up in the exercise of their duties. You are on record, sir, as saying that you're aware of that.

Whose decision was it for officers to be conducting their duties with their name badges and numbers covered up?

Chief William Blair: Okay. First of all, I have a rule in the Toronto Police Service—it's my rule; it's in accordance with the policy of my Police Services Board—that our officers will wear their names displayed on their uniforms. You'll notice that I wear mine.

Mr. Don Davies: Right.

Chief William Blair: All of our officers have this affixed. It's done with Velcro; it has first initial and last name. It is a rule that they wear it. If an individual officer chose not to wear it, he would be breaking a rule.

What I have stated is that if they have made a choice to engage in misconduct by disobeying a rule of the service, they will be held accountable and be disciplined.

Mr. Don Davies: And be disciplined, yes, and you said a few months ago to Mr. Paikin that they would in fact be disciplined. Have any officers in fact been disciplined to this date?

Chief William Blair: Yes.

Mr. Don Davies: How many?

Chief William Blair: Approximately 90 officers. We had 13 public complaints, but I directed that an investigation be conducted. We reviewed those thousands of hours of videotape that I made reference to earlier, and we identified approximately 90 officers who were not wearing their name badges as required by our rule. Disciplinary processes have been initiated against everyone who was there by—

Mr. Don Davies: So, sir, that couldn't have been an individual decision of officers, if 90 officers decided to—

Chief William Blair: I disagree completely with you, sir.

Mr. Don Davies: You think that 90 officers just by coincidence all decided at the same time, without talking to each other, to cover up their names and badges when it's a rule of the chief of police of Toronto that they keep them displayed? Is that your evidence?

Chief William Blair: I think individual officers make that choice. They are all issued a name tag that has their name on it. If they chose to remove that name tag contrary to the rule, then they're held individually—

Mr. Don Davies: Sir, that sounds like a conspiracy to me. If 90 officers—

Chief William Blair: Well, Mr. Davies, it may—

Mr. Don Davies: If 90 officers decide to do this—

Chief William Blair: —but let me tell you that the matter was investigated very thoroughly and individuals are held accountable for the choices that they make.

Mr. Don Davies: What's the level of discipline they received, sir?

Chief William Blair: That's still to be determined, but the discussion, I believe, is about the loss of a day's pay—eight hours.

• (1625)

Mr. Don Davies: Okay. I want to talk about the conditions of detention. We've heard from just about every source that people were toileting in front of each other, were deprived of medicine. You heard some testimony here today that people were deprived of the right to contact counsel, which is a clear violation of the Charter of Rights and the right of a person to contact a lawyer immediately or within a reasonable time upon being arrested; you know that as a police officer.

What steps have you taken to investigate the conditions of detention where there were clearly constitutional and charter breaches that occurred in that detention centre?

Chief William Blair: Again, I'm not sure it's as clear as you've indicated. Fortunately, there's a great deal of evidence available to us.

There are allegations that are being investigated by the OIPRD, as I've referenced. He has not yet completed that investigation. It would be inappropriate for me to comment or to make a determination prior to his doing his job. It's an important job. We are cooperating fully with him. He's been given access to all of the information and all of the evidence, and my officers are cooperating with him in that investigation. He's doing that work.

We have also made access to that facility available to those authorities and to the public so they can see precisely what the conditions were there.

There were a number of allegations made. There was some consistency in those allegations. One of the allegations made, for example, was made very early to the public and the media, and that was allegations of sexual assault. When it became more public knowledge that there were video cameras there, those allegations were withdrawn. But there were a number of allegations made.

We were processing a lot of people. We were faced with a rather difficult logistical issue of moving people through that. I believe there were some delays as a result of the number of people processed, but we had in place the facility and the resources to ensure that people's rights were afforded them. We had legal counsel on the premises; we had phones available to them—

Mr. Don Davies: Well, sir, hundreds of people have said that their rights were violated—

The Chair: Excuse me, Mr. Davies. Your time is up. Thank you.

We'll now move to Mr. MacKenzie.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to the members of the panel.

I know that some of my colleagues on this side will have some questions coming from the questions on the other side. I'm not sure they really understand the role of the police. Hopefully we can clarify some of that and/or the responsibility lines.

This is to any of the police officers: can somebody tell me if they are aware of the Anti-Capitalist Convergence and what that organization may be?

Chief William Blair: I'm not certain, sir. It's an acronym like... I've heard many names and acronyms with relation to a number of organizations that participated in this. There were a number of coalitions.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Would there be any anarchist groups that participated in the demonstrations?

Chief William Blair: There are a number of organizations that call themselves anarchist groups on their social websites and in their communications—indicating that they are anarchist in origin—that were participating in these demonstrations that took place on the summit.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Your organization, the police community, would have been aware that people were going to be there representing those bodies?

Chief William Blair: Yes, sir, we were aware.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: I appreciate the photos that you had here. In some of them, I notice that the black bloc was obviously the centre part. There are a lot of other people. I think, Chief, you mentioned that in some of these cases there were police officers embedded, and that's to be expected. I expect there were other bodies—legitimate bodies—embedded within the groups, including the press.

Chief William Blair: That's correct.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: I would not have expected that they would turn over their files. In this country we understand that and we respect it. But I'm wondering if you had any dealings with the press, with the actual live coverage of some of the incidents that people did get to see, and how balanced or unbalanced you feel it was. Were there any particular incidents that might illustrate why some parts of the community have different views of the whole?

Chief William Blair: There was one particular incident, and it relates directly to the event we've displayed. This took place on Friday evening. There were no criminal charges arising from this event, which is one of the reasons I felt I could bring images of it; it doesn't compromise any ongoing criminal trial.

With this event, there was a clear element within that demonstration. I've spoken to two reporters who were with that crowd, and they were standing within 20 feet of this, yet both of them reported the next day that the crowd was provoked when the police donned their helmets.

I was out there that day and I witnessed what was taking place. There were things being thrown at the police from that group—golf balls and rocks and urine and feces—and the police officers put their helmets on to protect themselves from that assault.

The reporters were there and witnessed that, and yet there was not a single mention, not only of that assault but even of the presence of this group, in any of the media reporting on Friday night or on Saturday morning. I thought it was an extraordinary omission.

• (1630)

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: A somewhat distorted view of what occurred on Friday night, then?

Chief William Blair: Quite.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Yes. How many police and security personnel would have been involved in the G-20 in the Toronto area, considering that essentially there were police officers from across the country?

Chief William Blair: Altogether for both the G-8 and G-20, there was a total of 19,000 security personnel involved in this operation. It was very substantial security operation, perhaps the largest in Canadian history. Of course, the numbers were based on two very different sites that were a great deal of distance apart.

In Toronto, we had two areas of responsibility. One was the summit site, which was primarily the responsibility of the integrated security unit. Then there was the security on the streets of Toronto, which was primarily the responsibility of my service, but we had a lot of help in doing it. We had police services from across Canada, including the RCMP and the OPP, but there were also police services from Alberta, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland, and throughout the province of Ontario as well as the province of Quebec. They came to Toronto and they worked very closely with us to help keep our city and our community safe throughout that weekend.

Frankly, without their help, we would not have been able to maintain the safety of our city, given the threat that existed.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: We've heard from others from time to time who have been critical of the location, saying that it could have been held at the CNE grounds. Would there have been facilities to house over 3,000 reporters, the participants, and all of those others at the CNE grounds?

Chief William Blair: The hotels are located in the downtown core of Toronto. There are no hotels by the CNE grounds. There are some buildings there where meetings could have taken place. The Direct Energy Centre is where about 4,000 or 4,500 accredited media were located. There are other buildings on the CNE grounds where meetings could have taken place.

We would have faced the logistical challenges of moving the internationally protected persons and some of the participants from the hotels where they were staying to that site and back. It would have given a much larger exposure of an area that we would have had to protect over the course of the summit event.

Having the event in the Metro convention centre, in relatively close proximity to the hotels where most of the participants were staying, allowed us to have a smaller footprint where very, very strong security was required.

In any event, the demonstrations that took place in Toronto would have taken place in proximity to our central business district.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: So if folks were housed in the hotels, where they logically would be, creating a secure corridor to the CNE grounds would have taken more people and more resources.

Chief William Blair: We believe it might have. We would have had to protect the hotels in any event, because that's where some of the participants were staying. Plus, we would have had to protect the place and the space where the summit events were taking place. Because it was in the Metro convention centre, it was in relatively close proximity to the hotels.

If it had been located in the CNE—and it could have been—we would have had to maintain a larger corridor from the hotel sites all the way to the CNE. In any event, we would have had to protect the summit site and it likely would not have made a significant impact on where the demonstrations took place.

The Chair: You have about 20 seconds. Please summarize quickly.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: My colleagues wanted to explore the political interference from the federal government. Did you experience any of that?

Chief William Blair: None whatsoever, sir. I had no contact or communication with anyone from the federal government throughout the planning process, save and except the conversation I had with Mr. Elcock. I'm not aware of any direction or instruction, or any comment, that was made by anyone in the federal government as we planned and executed our plans for the safety of the summit.

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

We'll go to Mr. Kania.

Mr. Andrew Kania (Brampton West, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chief Blair, just on that very last point, you're saying that as the head of the Toronto Police Service, you had no contact with anybody—any politician, minister, or government official—in terms of the planning of the G-20 summit in Toronto.

Chief William Blair: No. There was a visit, well after the event was planned, by our public safety minister. He came to Toronto a few days before the summit. Actually, I don't know the precise date, but it was the day on which the earthquake struck up here near Ottawa, on the other side of the river. The public safety minister came. I showed him our major incident command centre, which we had constructed at police headquarters, and gave him a tour. I had a brief conversation with him on that day.

• (1635)

Mr. Andrew Kania: Thank you.

Can you advise us as to what date that was in due course?

Chief William Blair: Yes.

Mr. Andrew Kania: Thank you.

How long did that meeting last?

Chief William Blair: The public safety minister saw the room. We met. We had a brief discussion for perhaps 20 minutes and then we both went off to our jobs.

Mr. Andrew Kania: So for the entire period of time, and for all of the planning, and for all of the \$1.3 billion that was spent, you're

saying that the only direct involvement of the Minister of Public Safety or anybody on behalf of the federal government was a 20-minute tour that you provided.

Chief William Blair: No, I'm saying with me; first of all, I was not on the—

Mr. Andrew Kania: That's what I meant. I'm just talking about you.

Chief William Blair: I'm not a member of the integrated security unit planning team or the executive team. I'm the chief of police in Toronto. That was my only conversation with the minister about this event.

Mr. Andrew Kania: That's fine. I understand that you're the chief of police in Toronto, where the summit was being held, and you remained in control of the police force in Toronto for the summit, right?

Chief William Blair: That's right.

Mr. Andrew Kania: So the only contact that you, as the chief of police of Toronto, had with anybody from the federal government was you providing a 20-minute tour to the Minister of Public Safety.

Chief William Blair: Yes.

Mr. Andrew Kania: Thank you.

Chief Blair, you handled the G-20 in Toronto. Would you also have been able to handle the security parameters of the G-8 if the government had chosen to also hold the G-8 in Toronto?

Chief William Blair: I think it might have created some interesting challenges, but not dissimilar challenges. Provided I had the same level of support that I received throughout the G-20 from my policing partners, that's a possibility.

Mr. Andrew Kania: So it would have been a possibility. If you had had enough and adequate warning, you could have handled both. Is that fair to say?

Chief William Blair: I think it's fair to say. We weren't asked to do that. We had enough to do, quite frankly, with the G-20, but I think it's possible.

Mr. Andrew Kania: So, from your perspective.... The estimates that I have been advised of say that it cost about \$200 million more in taxpayers' dollars to split the summits between Huntsville and Toronto. I'm wondering if you are aware of any security reasons why that extra \$200 million would have had to be spent to divide the summits.

Chief William Blair: I can't answer that question. I have no information that I could assist you with. I just don't know. I don't know the basis of how that number was determined and I'm not aware of what costs they're referring to.

Mr. Andrew Kania: So as you sit here today, you can't think of anything in particular that would have required the additional expenditure of approximately \$200 million to split the summits.

Chief William Blair: I can't help you with that. I can't think of anything.

Mr. Andrew Kania: You can't think of anything. Okay.

Deputy Commissioner Beechey, you handled the G-8 in Huntsville. How much notice did you have in terms of planning the G-8?

D/Commr Larry Beechey: We had almost two years. We had a planning team in place approximately 18 months before.

Mr. Andrew Kania: Chief Blair, you had how much notice to plan the G-20 in Toronto?

Chief William Blair: We began planning in earnest in November 2009, so that's about eight months.

Mr. Andrew Kania: So you had eight months, and the OPP, for Huntsville, for the smaller summit, had approximately two years.

Now for the Huntsville summit, the G-8 summit, Deputy Commissioner, with adequate notice, from a security perspective, could you also have handled the G-20 summit in the Huntsville area?

D/Commr Larry Beechey: There would have been significant challenges, and not just in security. We had concerns about housing people up there, about the accommodations. As you heard in the previous testimony of the RCMP, we had to create a whole trailer village just for our own staff.

Overall, I think, when you're talking about the media and the rest of it, there would not have been the accommodations there. If it had to be split off that one site, it would have created another challenge for us that, probably, would have been comparable to the Toronto one.

Mr. Andrew Kania: For both of you, I have comparisons here of the G-20 summit in London, where \$30 million was spent, and the G-20 summit in Pittsburgh, where \$18 million U.S. was spent.

Can the two of you provide any reasons as to why \$1.2 billion or \$1.3 billion, whatever the final figure turns out to be, was spent on that?

The Chair: Very quickly, please.

•(1640)

Chief William Blair: Particularly with respect to the London summit—let me speak to that—I believe that it really is a comparison of apples and oranges.

First of all, the national police service of England is located in London. I believe there are 40,000 police officers working in London, which is also an international city that polices a number of very significant crowd control events and is adequately staffed for that.

Certainly, in the city of Toronto, I have 5,600 police officers, but we had to maintain business continuity and continue to police our city. We could not have policed an event of the magnitude of the G-20 in Toronto without the support of other police services from across Canada.

There are costs associated with bringing those police officers to Toronto, costs for housing them and feeding them and providing them with the necessary equipment to do their jobs. I believe this accounts to a large degree for the differences in expenses between what transpired in England and what transpired in Toronto.

In addition, I believe that the London numbers pertain only to the actual overtime costs of the personnel involved. I have learned from my experience with the G-20 that, in addition to overtime costs, there are many other costs associated with providing security for an event of this kind.

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

We'll go to Mr. Norlock.

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Thank you very much to the witnesses for appearing today.

I will start with a comment. This committee has not heard from the mayor of Toronto, so it should be reticent in talking about evidence that we have not heard.

First, I would like to ask you, Chief Blair, did you have enough time, in your opinion, to plan for this summit and to provide adequate security for the people of Toronto and the people attending the summit and for the safety of your officers?

Chief William Blair: [*Inaudible—Editor*]...to get the job done. I have to tell you that it was an extraordinary effort by some great people who worked very, very hard to get us ready, but we had a lot of support in doing that. There were a lot of communications back and forth among our summit partners.

I believe that you can't prevent every crime. You can't plan and prepare for every and any eventuality. But I think the work that was necessary was done. We had the resources there that we needed to do the job.

Mr. Rick Norlock: Thank you.

Deputy Commissioner, did you feel that you and the Ontario Provincial Police had sufficient time to plan for the safety of the Huntsville residents, the people of Toronto, and the people attending the G-8 and for the safety of your officers?

D/Commr Larry Beechey: Yes. The one thing I would like to mention, nonetheless, is that even though we had a lot more time than Toronto, some of our challenges were around the building of infrastructure. For example, we had a detachment up there that looked after about 40 officers, and we had to go to a radio-telecom system that supported over 3,000 officers. So there were still major challenges, but we did have enough time to prepare.

Mr. Rick Norlock: Thank you very much.

I'll start with Chief Blair and then ask Mr. Beechey the following.

Were you directed by any mayor or elected official in Toronto, any elected federal person or appointed person, or any department telling you how to go about providing safety and security?

Chief William Blair: No.

D/Commr Larry Beechey: No, sir.

Mr. Rick Norlock: For the 19,000 security personnel who were in Toronto, do you believe you had sufficient resources—

Chief William Blair: I'm sorry, sir, but not all 19,000 of them were in Toronto. They were split between the two events.

Mr. Rick Norlock: In Toronto, about how many personnel were there?

Chief William Blair: Initially, I believe, the number was approximately 6,000, but when the events transpired on Saturday and it became clear that we needed additional personnel and help, the help was forthcoming. The OPP sent a lot of their resources down from Huntsville on Saturday night to help us in Toronto.

Mr. Rick Norlock: Thank you.

I believe Mr. McColeman has some questions for you.

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brant, CPC): Yes, I do.

I just want to step back for a second and ask Mr. Gagnon a question, because he didn't get a chance to answer it. Have you ever heard of or are you aware of the Anti-Capitalist Convergence?

[Translation]

Mr. Kevin Gagnon: Yes, I know that it exists now. But when I wanted to go to the G20 summit, I just sent an e-mail to transportg20@gmail.com. That was the service that got us to Toronto. Then you could demonstrate for whatever you wanted.

• (1645)

[English]

Mr. Phil McColeman: Were you aware they had transported individuals such as you—students—into Toronto and had prepared a poster and other materials that read, “Come to Toronto—Attack the G-20”? Did you ever see that poster?

[Translation]

Mr. Kevin Gagnon: No, I did not see posters like that. I had my own, one that I made for myself. I knew no one on the buses. I really was there on my own.

[English]

Mr. Phil McColeman: But you did ride on those buses?

[Translation]

Mr. Kevin Gagnon: Yes, exactly.

[English]

Mr. Phil McColeman: Yes, you did. Okay. Are you a member of that organization?

[Translation]

Mr. Kevin Gagnon: No, not at all. I am not a member of any organization. I do not even demonstrate on a regular basis. I have been to five demonstrations in my life.

[English]

Mr. Phil McColeman: Okay. Also, in terms of the individuals who were there, either during your trip or when you arrived in Toronto, did you meet with or make contact with any of the individuals who were obviously using black bloc tactics? Were you in close proximity to them or were you ever aware of their activities while you were there?

[Translation]

Mr. Kevin Gagnon: No, not at all. A lot of CLAC people were arrested and I met them afterwards at meetings. But I do not know anyone with a profile like that. They have political views that I do not share at all, but they caused no damage or anything of the sort. Most of them were sleeping with us in the gymnasium and all the charges against them were dropped.

[English]

Mr. Phil McColeman: I have one last question.

The Chair: No, thank you, Mr. McColeman. Our time is up.

We'll move over to the Bloc.

[Translation]

Mr. Gaudet, you have five minutes.

Mr. Roger Gaudet (Montcalm, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Blair and Mr. Giroux, I have seen the photos. How come you did not arrest the people in disguises and masks? You went into a university gymnasium at four o'clock in the morning and you arrested people as they slept.

There were people in masks. But it was not Halloween weekend, it was June. Halloween is October 31. How come you did not arrest those people on the spot? They were all together. It would have been easy to surround them and take them off to prison. That would have settled the matter for the weekend. But you let them go and, instead, you arrested some poor students in a university gymnasium. Can you explain the logic behind that?

[English]

Chief William Blair: Certainly, sir, I'd be delighted to explain that to you. This was a crowd of several thousand, and for the police to penetrate into that crowd in an effort to apprehend those individuals.... First of all, they had not yet begun to riot tumultuously, as they did the following day. So unfortunately, there needs to be access—

[Translation]

Mr. Roger Gaudet: Those people were wearing masks. It wasn't a costume party.

[English]

Chief William Blair: Yes, and—

[Translation]

Mr. Roger Gaudet: You knew what you had to do. You should have arrested them immediately. But no, the force's finest went to a university gymnasium the next morning. It is ridiculous.

[English]

Chief William Blair: Mr. Gaudet, if I may answer your question, the decision was made to not try to penetrate that crowd, because it would have created a more dangerous situation. In fact, an operational decision was made by the investigators that a safer place to apprehend people whom they believed were involved in criminal activity was the school gymnasium, away from the crowd. That was a safer thing to do.

Our responsibility is to maintain the rule of law and to protect the public, but also to do our job in a way that does not compromise public safety. The decision was made to not try to penetrate that crowd to remove this group, but rather to do it in a safer environment, which was why the arrests were made in a school gymnasium in the very early hours of the morning, as opposed to out on the street where a riot might have ensued.

The Chair: Thank you, Chief Blair.

Madame Mourani.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Thank you.

Mr. Blair, you said that you made the choice to make the arrests in the gymnasium. So you made the assumption that there were people...

[English]

Chief William Blair: The police made a choice, yes.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: They assumed that there were black block people in the gymnasium. That's why they went there.

[English]

Chief William Blair: No. Again, without getting into the details of that arrest, which are for other processes, the police had reason to believe the people they were arresting were involved in criminal activity. There were a number of different investigations that were taking place with respect to that group. Evidence had been gathered that gave the police reasonable and probable grounds, and when the crowd—

• (1650)

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: You said that you had evidence; so how is it that none of the people you arrested in that gymnasium have charges against them any more? Perhaps one or two still do because they refuse to plead guilty.

[English]

Chief William Blair: My understanding—and forgive me, I don't have the details of this and I can only offer you my understanding and the explanation I have received as to why those charges were dropped—is that it was because the police did not have the appropriate warrant for the apprehension of those individuals—

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: They did not have enough evidence.

[English]

Chief William Blair: —but that does not negate the fact they had evidence to make an arrest.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Are you are telling me that, when you went into that gymnasium to arrest a hundred or so people and take them off to a detention centre with no regard for their rights as individuals, you had no warrant? That is how I understand it.

[English]

Chief William Blair: The crown and the court determined that the circumstances of that arrest required what is called a Feeney warrant and that the police did not have the appropriate warrant to make those arrests. The crown also commented and—

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: They had no warrant, but they arrested people anyway.

[English]

Chief William Blair: —the court also commented—

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: That is just great. Democracy for ever!

[English]

The Chair: Continue, Mr. Blair.

Madame Mourani, let Mr. Blair explain.

Chief William Blair: The court also commented that the officers had reasonable and probable grounds to make that arrest, but there was a technical problem with the way in which the arrest was done, and that's why the charges were dropped. That's my understanding.

The Chair: Did they have a warrant?

Chief William Blair: What's that...?

The Chair: Did they have a warrant?

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Are you using my time?

[English]

Chief William Blair: It was determined after the fact that the warrant was required to enter and make those arrests.

Mrs. Maria Mourani: I need two minutes more.

The Chair: Go ahead, Madame Mourani.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Mr. Blair, you say that you could not go into that crowd, and I respect your assessment of the situation. I would still like you to explain why, when people wearing masks—let's say black block people—destroyed police cars and smashed windows, there were no police on site to make arrests. Where were the police when the vandalism took place?

I have seen the video with my own eyes. The police got out of the cars and left. One car was left right in the middle of the crowd and was destroyed. Windows were being smashed, but no police cars were on the scene. How do you explain that?

A voice: If you ask me, the police did it themselves.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Mourani.

Mr. Blair, quickly, we're over time.

Chief William Blair: I'll be very quick.

First of all, most of my police officers were with the 10,000-plus people who were lawfully demonstrating. We have a responsibility to them as well. We had our public order people arrayed to protect the summit site.

Unfortunately, when police officers were being assaulted and attacked, police officers in their cars were driving into the area surrounded by, frankly, the mob. The choice was either to drive through the mob, thereby putting people—even if they're involved in criminal activity—at considerable risk. As they attacked the cars, the police officers, on a couple of occasions, were compelled to abandon their cars because they were attacked and physically assaulted in the cars by the mob. That's what transpired on the streets.

It took some time, quite frankly, to disengage from the 10,000 people in the demonstration and from the summit site to bring people up in an effort to contain those several hundred people who had run away from the police to begin smashing windows, burning cars, and looting stores. It takes some time to do that. Then they immediately went into another area and took off their disguises.

But fortunately we have many video images and, through the good work of our investigators, we have been able to identify these individuals. Because I think there's an expectation among Canadians that the people who engage in criminal acts will be held accountable for their crimes. That's why we've worked so hard to identify these individuals.

But let me assure you that my officers were put in a very dangerous and difficult situation in those circumstances. Many of them acted with great courage and restraint. I can also tell you that over the course of that weekend we had thousands of cameras pointed at us every day—every hour of every day, in every action of the police.

With great respect, I think that all of those video images that have been posted and displayed demonstrate quite clearly that the officers acted with restraint; they acted according to the rule of law; they acted within their lawful authorities; they maintained their discipline; and they did their very best to protect the citizens of Toronto, while at the same time trying to facilitate lawful, peaceful protest.

The overwhelming majority of citizens helped us and cooperated with that. Some chose not to and placed themselves at risk of being apprehended and arrested.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Blair.

We'll go to Mr. Lobb and Mr. Rathgeber.

• (1655)

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank the guests for coming today.

To me, it just defies logic when I hear the coalition ramble away. They're Monday-morning quarterbacks. They have it all figured out after the fact.

Mr. Davies, he'd take the word of the black bloc before he'd take the word of the police officers. Mr. Gaudet's logic...arrest them all because they had masks on. Using that same logic—

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Chairman, I have a point of order here.

The Chair: Just one moment.

On a point of order—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Roger Gaudet: Are you serious? Did you bang your head? I am asking you directly.

[*English*]

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Davies.

Mr. Gaudet, order.

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Chair—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Roger Gaudet: He must have banged his head and could do with a bit of hair on it.

[*English*]

Mr. Don Davies: Excuse me.

Mr. Chair, I have the floor.

I'm used to Mr. Lobb's dramatic exaggeration, but with respect, for him to suggest that I said anything like I would take the word of the black bloc over the police, when I said no such thing, is highly offensive. It's not true. I ask that he withdraw that immediately. It's a false premise.

The Chair: Yes. I'll tell all members to be very careful in their choice of words and in assuming any position of any other member unless it was specifically laid out, without going into it, in order to keep the decorum and the tenor in a proper way.

Go ahead, Mr. Lobb.

Mr. Ben Lobb: Thanks.

My colleagues—

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: A point of order, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: We've already dealt with that point of order.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: I wanted to raise a point of order, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: Go ahead, Madame Mourani.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: I am asking for Mr. Lobb to show some respect in his remarks, Mr. Chair. He used the term “Monday morning quarterback” again and you should make a decision about it for this committee. I do not want him to use it again until you have made that decision, Mr. Chair. That kind of attitude is unacceptable.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Madame Mourani, I'm not certain how they're translating it. The English version of the phrase that you find offensive, “Monday-morning quarterback”...it may be offensive when it's translated. The reason you're taking offence, I guess, is that it means something different *en français* than in English.

But to all members, I would say that we need to have more respect and more decorum.

We'll just continue, Mr. Lobb.

Mr. Ben Lobb: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would note that the members opposite hurled equal accusations across to our guests here today, our witnesses here today, and they feel fine doing so.

Back to my line of questioning, Mr. Gaudet commented on how easy it would be to arrest all the people with their masks on.

Using Mr. Gaudet's same logic, you must have been very busy on Halloween, because there were a lot of people with masks on then. I mean, that's his logic there.

My question to you, Chief Blair, is that Chief Superintendent Alphonse MacNeil made comments about how basically at the end of the day there were—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Roger Gaudet: A point of order, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: We have a point of order.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Roger Gaudet: If Mr. Lobb has questions for me, tell him to ask them and I will answer. If not, could he please put his questions to the witnesses here?

[*English*]

The Chair: That's not a point of order.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Roger Gaudet: I said not one word against the government just now. I asked the witnesses here questions. If the people opposite did not understand that, we have a big problem. I said not one word against the government just now. I was asking questions of the police officers, the police representatives, who were here.

I just want him to do the same thing as us. If he does anything else, it is not going to work here, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Gaudet. I'll take that under advisement.

Mr. Lobb was simply making the point that you questioned the officers on why they were not out arresting those who were masked. That is what Mr. Lobb said. He did not come back on the government. He did not—

No more point of order....

Go ahead, Mr. Lobb.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Roger Gaudet: Mr. Chair, I did not say that the government did something wrong, or did this or that. Be careful what you say.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Gaudet, that is not a point of order. You're out of order.

Continue, Mr. Lobb.

And let's be cautious.

Mr. Ben Lobb: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chief Superintendent MacNeil commented about broken windows and a few damaged police cars, but the safety of the public and the delegates was definitely there. Could you comment on that?

Chief William Blair: First of all, on our responsibility to maintain the safety and security of the summit, I believe that was a successful mission. There was no interference with either the summit site itself or the motorcades.

There was difficulty in maintaining the public peace. We certainly saw significant disruptions to the public peace, damage to private property, and the injury of two innocent people, including police officers, on Saturday afternoon. It then required a great deal of work over the next two days to prevent a further breach of the peace in the city of Toronto and to protect our citizens.

A number of reviews are taking place. We are cooperating fully with those reviews because I believe it is the responsibility of the police to be publicly accountable to the public through our civilian authorities. We are doing our best to do that.

• (1700)

Mr. Ben Lobb: I thank you for your work. And I know a lot of people here on the other side think it's so easy to be a police officer, and it's just so easy....

Recently in my riding of Huron—Bruce, we had Commissioner Lewis presenting awards in our area for all the great work of the men and women who wear the uniform, show up for work every day, and put their lives on the line.

I'd like to thank the OPP and the Toronto police and all the people who participated in providing security. I'd like to thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lobb.

Mr. Rathgeber, please.

Mr. Brent Rathgeber (Edmonton—St. Albert, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all the witnesses for your attendance here today.

I'd like to start with Chief Blair and Commissioner Beechey and to commend you for the work you and your organizations did. The policing was obviously very difficult. It was a very challenging time with trying to balance the security of the attendees at the conferences and those who were engaged in peaceful protests. I commend you.

You mentioned in your opening comments, Chief Blair, that it was an explicit part of your mandate to facilitate peaceful protests and you regarded that as one of your responsibilities. I agree with that and I agree with its importance. I wonder if you could provide the committee with some details as to how you and the security partners were able to facilitate the peaceful protests. What tactics did you employ?

Chief William Blair: Actually, we worked very closely with our citizens and with various groups that were planning to engage in protest. We met with the organizers of the majority of those protests that took place throughout the week. We offered our assistance in helping them plan their events and helped provide safe rallying points to work together collaboratively in providing security for that event. I believe very sincerely that it was the intent of the overwhelming majority of people who came to Toronto to protest to do so lawfully and peacefully. We worked very closely with them.

I think we have a good tradition in this country. I believe I have a good tradition in Toronto in doing everything we can to facilitate lawful, peaceful protests. There is a line, of course, where you have to ensure that balance between the right of the public to be safe and secure and the right of our individual citizens to express themselves. We find it's best to keep that balance by working collaboratively with the people who are planning these protests.

For example, we also worked to provide a place where people could rally. It has often been called a sort of "free speech zone", and it was not, and I made very public statements as we prepared for the summit that all of Canada is a free speech zone. But we did provide a facility in the northern part of Queen's Park where people could rally, where they could gather, and we would work with them to help them park their cars and gather safely. We would direct traffic around them and move with them as they engaged in protest. That took place on several occasions. There was even a demonstration on Saturday involving tens of thousands of lawful, peaceful protesters who we were working with and walking with and we had great cooperation from them.

It's very unfortunate that the right of Canadians to engage in lawful, peaceful protest was compromised by the actions of criminal groups who made it impossible, frankly.

I have to tell you that one of the challenges of trying to police lawful, peaceful protests and respect all citizens' rights to express themselves is that it's very difficult when you're also trying to manage a mob. The mob was using the cover of a large, law-abiding crowd to launch their illegal attacks on the city and on our citizens. It did compromise our ability, to some extent, to continue to work to maintain those lawful, peaceful protests and the protestors' rights to do that.

Even after the riot had taken place, there were other protests that were taking place and that we were able to work with, but some of our ability to do that was made very difficult. Even as we moved with 10,000 people, with several hundred were attacking our city, we stayed with the 10,000 and we got them back safely to their points of origin. We allowed them to do what they had come to do, which was to protest lawfully.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Blair.

We'll now move to Madame Mendes.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First, Mr. Gagnon, I would like to congratulate you for being here after what you went through last summer. If I had been in your place, I think that I would have been very hesitant to come and face authority figures again, whoever they were. I congratulate you for your courage.

● (1705)

[*English*]

I don't want to judge, Chief Blair, what really happened or not, or how you based your intention to arrest on the Sunday morning. I do want to question how it happened and what happened.

The way these kids were treated was inhuman. You may have had all the reasons to arrest them, but they were sleeping. They didn't need the force and the kind of aggressive manhandling that they got.

My only question is, why did your officers think it necessary to manhandle them that way?

Chief William Blair: Again, with great respect—

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: And I mean, he's not the first—

Chief William Blair: No, that's fine, but there is a mechanism, an appropriate mechanism, which is regulated in our laws, for investigating complaints against the conduct of the police. For people who have made complaints, we have an independent police review process in the province of Ontario. It allows someone who's not part of the police, who has the resources and a legal mandate, to conduct such investigations.

I understand that he has those complaints and he's investigating them. Frankly, my responsibility is to do everything I can to cooperate and to provide him with the evidence and information he needs to do his job, and then I will respect the decisions he makes on the basis of that evidence.

I'm unable to respond to the allegations that you bring forward today, except to tell you that those matters are being investigated by an appropriate body that has the authority to do so, and the police services are cooperating with that body in that investigation.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: Thank you for that.

Were there closed-circuit cameras at the detention centre like there were in downtown Toronto?

Chief William Blair: Yes, there were cameras every 10 feet, in fact. I went through the facility to ensure that there was thorough coverage of the video cameras. Any areas that were not covered by camera were marked off and blocked off and no prisoners were taken into those areas. So with the exception of places where people were going to be searched, where privacy must be assured, there were cameras in those facilities both to provide protection to the prisoners who were being processed there and also to help us have evidence to respond to allegations of misconduct.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: At the gymnasium where the kids were staying and where they were arrested, were there any closed-circuit cameras there?

Chief William Blair: Not to my knowledge. I have no knowledge of that; I wasn't there. I'm aware that those arrests were made. I wasn't involved in that investigation. If there are complaints about that event, then they're most appropriately made, again, to the Office of the Independent Police Review Director.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: I understand, yes. I understand that is ongoing right now.

Chief William Blair: Yes.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: Do you have any idea when we can expect a result?

Chief William Blair: I think you'd have to make that inquiry of the OIPRD. Quite frankly, he takes as long as he takes. We provide every assistance to him so that he might fulfill his mandate.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: Mark, do you want to ask any more questions?

The Chair: You have about two minutes.

Mr. Mark Holland: I'm just wondering, Mr. Blair, if I can come back to the question that I asked earlier. This was going to the chain of the command. I'm just wondering if you could take a moment now, if you recall that question, to....

Chief William Blair: I do recall the question. We had a rather well-documented chain of command for the protection of the summit site. In our integrated security unit, we have a number of people on the ground, our operational commanders on the ground, who are out on the street and who have the ability to make decisions based on what they're observing.

In the summit site, that was managed primarily through the unified command centre as led by the ISU. On the streets of Toronto, most of that command work came back through our major incident command centre.

The persons in charge of the major incident command centre are employees of the Toronto Police Service. They're my people; they were superintendents. They're extremely experienced in dealing with large incidents and public order incidents. Two of those officers, each working 12 hours, day and evening, were responsible for running our major incident command centre.

When you asked me about the chain of command, it really depends on which events. Some is related—

Mr. Mark Holland: I will speak specifically to the question, because it was the chair of the Toronto Police Services Board who described this grey area. He was saying that it was unclear how much influence the integrated security unit, led by the RCMP, had over policing decisions. He said that had created the complications with respect to accountability. Do you agree with him on that?

• (1710)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Holland.

Chief William Blair: I agree that they seek clarification for that. We're providing them with that clarification, to our Police Services Board.

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

We'll come back to the government side.

Mr. Norlock, please, for five minutes.

Mr. Rick Norlock: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

If I could just ask one question, Chief Blair, does the chair of the Police Services Board involve himself or herself in the operations of the Toronto Police Service?

Chief William Blair: No. In fact, he's precluded by the Police Services Act of Ontario from engaging in any operations. Operations are my responsibility, but we are subject to civilian governance and oversight through a police services board, and I'm accountable to that civilian authority for the way in which I do my job.

Mr. Rick Norlock: Thank you very much, and we're very happy that you do.

If I remember correctly, the OCCOPS, the Ontario...perhaps you could let the folks know what that acronym stands for. It's the Ontario Civil Commission on Policing Services, I believe.

Chief William Blair: The Ontario Civilian Commission on Policing Services, yes.

Mr. Rick Norlock: Any person in Ontario, anywhere, and to any police station, can make a complaint verbally, in writing, or by telephone, and that complaint must be acted upon and investigated. That complaint goes directly to the civilian commission on policing in Ontario?

Chief William Blair: No, it doesn't go directly any more, sir; the law was changed in Ontario. In fact, I agree—every complaint must be investigated—but about two years ago the Province of Ontario enacted a new office, the Office of the Independent Police Review Director, and the complaints go to that individual. There's a further adjudication responsibility that OCCOPS has for determining how those complaints are resolved by the chief of police.

Mr. Rick Norlock: I apologize.

Chief William Blair: That's quite all right, sir.

Mr. Rick Norlock: It has been 10 years since I was involved in policing.

I think the people at home need to know just a little bit more about how you prepared for this. You mentioned at the beginning of your testimony—and Deputy Commissioner Beechey can tell me from the OPP side of things—that the officers who were assigned to this duty, as you prepared for this operation, were given about two days of specialized training for this event.

Chief William Blair: They're all trained and qualified police officers, but in preparation for this event, we first of all cancelled all their leaves, because we needed all hands on deck. Everybody had to work—everybody working in Toronto. It was not only the Toronto police officers, but all of the police officers who were coming to help us.

First of all, they were all given two online training requirements that they had to complete successfully, and then at least one full day of operational training. Most of the online work pertained to their legal authorities. We wanted to ensure that our police officers knew the limits of their authorities and that they knew how to work together in maintaining public safety.

So we trained together, and even in preparation for the event, we gathered most of those resources in the week leading up to the summit site. So although there was at least one full day of formal training, they were working collaboratively together for the five or six days before the site.

Training was very important to us. We wanted to make sure that our people knew how to work together, that our communication systems worked, that there was consistency in our policies and operational directives, and that there was a very clear line of communication and a clear line of command.

One of the challenges in policing an event of this magnitude is ensuring that your people maintain their ranks, maintain their discipline, and do their job in a way that is lawful. So we trained our people quite relentlessly in preparation for this event.

Quite frankly, we know, because events like the G-20 have happened in other places, that public complaints are an inevitable result. Civil suits are an inevitable result. Calls for public inquiries are also an inevitable result. Quite frankly, calls for the resignation or firing of the chief of police are usually an inevitable result. We prepared our people for those complaints. We took every prudent step we were able to in order to ensure that our people knew their jobs, that they were properly supervised and properly managed, and did their job according to the rule of law.

Mr. Rick Norlock: Deputy Commissioner, please.

D/Commr Larry Beechey: I might add, the same as Chief Blair said, that we brought our people in and we brought in our supervisors an extra day early, and also our logistical people, to set up and to know the whole operation around the G-8. Then we brought the rest of our members in for a full day of training. Also, it was all consistent with the online training.

I would like to mention that we had three full exercises leading up to this, for every venue and every organization. As well, our public order units that we knew would be working together.... We had two other police agencies working with us in Huntsville and we knew, given the intelligence we had, that we would probably be down in Toronto and that we all needed to work together, so we did that with our public order units. As well, several police agencies around Ontario do that on a regular basis, as we do in Toronto, so we're used to working with each other. We know each other and we're prepared.

• (1715)

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

Thank you, Mr. Norlock.

We'll come back to Mr. Kania, please.

Mr. Andrew Kania: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chief Blair, you indicated that you had I think nine months to plan this.

Chief William Blair: Approximately, sir, yes.

Mr. Andrew Kania: When you first became aware of this, I think you indicated that you started planning in advance with the anticipation that this would be happening. Is that accurate?

Chief William Blair: There are two things, sir.

First of all, G-8 meetings have been held in Canada previously and in other jurisdictions, and usually demonstrations ensue in the large urban areas close to them. It was going to be either in Ottawa or in Toronto. We began preparing and planning with our partners in the OPP and the RCMP for what we believed were likely going to be demonstrations in Toronto. That happened very early in the planning process.

In addition to that, when there was some indication, some discussion, about the possibility of a G-20, we monitored public statements in the newspapers and the speculation that was taking place. Frankly, recognizing the rather tight planning window available to us, we began planning for that eventuality.

Mr. Andrew Kania: When you began planning for that eventuality, did you take into account different possible locations where it might be held within the GTA?

Chief William Blair: Yes.

Mr. Andrew Kania: Was one of those locations the CNE grounds?

Chief William Blair: There was some discussion of that as a possibility.

Mr. Andrew Kania: So you started planning for the CNE grounds as a possibility.

Chief William Blair: We gave it consideration, but frankly, the planning did not proceed very far before it became apparent where we were going to be.

Mr. Andrew Kania: You saw that as one potential and reasonable place where it could be held.

Chief William Blair: It was a place that might be considered.

Mr. Andrew Kania: Are you aware of anybody, such as Mayor Miller, who recommended that it be held at the CNE grounds?

Chief William Blair: I had some conversations with our mayor in which he expressed to me some thought that it might be a good location. I offered my opinion to him on that.

Mr. Andrew Kania: What was your opinion to him?

Chief William Blair: My opinion to him was that it would not have a significant impact on our security arrangements, except that it might give us a larger area to protect.

Mr. Andrew Kania: What would the advantages of the CNE grounds have been?

Chief William Blair: As an area to secure, if it had been held in one of the buildings, because it's isolated from other buildings, it would perhaps have had less impact on other businesses and citizens. In the area where the summit subsequently took place, there are a number of condominium buildings. There are people who live and work in that area. It might have had less impact on their daily operations and lives if the summit site had been at that location.

Mr. Andrew Kania: Would it have potentially been less disruptive to the downtown core and potentially less costly or harmful to the businesses there?

Chief William Blair: It's difficult for me to speculate. Frankly, I was looking at it in terms of how you maintain the security of such an event. We had a community liaison group within the planning process. We were working with businesses and community groups to try to minimize the impact of the summit weekend activities on them and were giving them as much information as possible.

We even went to the extent of delivering over one million flyers to the people of Toronto and about ten thousand flyers to the businesses impacted in that location. We spent money and took out advertisements in six of our newspapers, including in several different languages, informing the people of Toronto of what they might expect as an impact, both through traffic disruptions and their ability to move through the area secured for the summit.

We wanted to provide as much information as possible to our citizens to minimize and mitigate the impact of the summit on their daily lives.

Mr. Andrew Kania: Deputy Commissioner, my understanding—correct me if I'm wrong, please—is that there were no arrests at the G-8 in Huntsville. Is that correct?

D/Commr Larry Beechey: That's correct.

Mr. Andrew Kania: Chief Blair, can you explain why there would have been no arrests in Huntsville, yet 1,000 people, roughly, were arrested and let go without any charges?

• (1720)

Chief William Blair: Certainly. There were a number of people arrested in Toronto because criminal acts occurred there, and people were arrested and charged with those criminal acts.

In addition, there was a very significant breach of the peace that took place on Saturday. There was, in my opinion, a very reasonable apprehension of a continued risk of a breach of the peace that continued throughout that weekend at a number of different locations. Decisions were made by the incident commanders and operational people on the ground that it was necessary, to prevent a breach of the peace, to detain those individuals under the breach of peace legislation of the Criminal Code, and that was done.

A significant number of people who were apprehended were not apprehended with the intention of bringing criminal charges against them. Rather, they were apprehended under the breach of peace legislation to prevent that breach. The circumstances were such that I think we had a very real apprehension that the peace was very much at risk from the demonstrations taking place over that weekend. Certainly there was strong evidence from what transpired on Saturday afternoon about the intent of those individuals.

People were apprehended and detained under that legislation without an intention to bring them up on criminal charges, because there is no charge under breach of the peace. It is simply preventive detention to maintain the public peace.

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

We'll now go to Madame Mourani.

[Translation]

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

Mr. Blair, just now, you said that you have identified 90 police officers who are going to be disciplined for concealing their names, contrary to police rules.

In your opinion, in your experience, why does a police officer conceal his name?

[English]

Chief William Blair: There could be a number of reasons and we are investigating the reasons why the person was not wearing his identification. As I've indicated to you, they're attached with Velcro. Because there were struggles on the street in many cases, there may be some circumstances where they were removed. We'll investigate to determine if anyone was engaged in misconduct.

I believe some officers removed them so they would not be identifiable. Of course, we now have identified them, and we'll hold them accountable for that. We take our rules very seriously. It's a serious rule in the Toronto Police Service.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Fine. But why would they not want to be identified, in your opinion?

[English]

Chief William Blair: Again, you're asking me to speculate. I can speculate that they may have wanted to avoid being held accountable or being identified.

We've had quite an issue in Toronto. I'll explain this as quickly as I can. When I issued an order that we would wear name tags, a number of concerns were raised by our police union. If people were identified by their name tags, they could then be subject to harassment through the Internet—they could be identified. We actually went before an arbitrator, and we've been awaiting a ruling for over two and a half years. But they expressed an apprehension that if they were identified by name, persons could identify them, locate their addresses, and perhaps subject them to threats and things. So that is one possibility.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Okay.

I have another question. Explain to me how, in Canada, a person can be detained for two, three or four days without a warrant. How can that person be held? Under which act? I have to confess that I do not understand.

[English]

Chief William Blair: Let me be very clear. I've mentioned the apprehensions and the preventative detentions that took place under the breach of the peace legislation. That legislation is very explicit. It is only while there's a reasonable apprehension of a breach of the peace, and in any event, not for longer than 24 hours. That's the law.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: That is to keep the peace, is it?

[English]

Chief William Blair: It's to prevent a breach of the peace. A person can be detained while the threat to the peace exists, and not for longer than 24 hours.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: But the person cannot be held for more than 24 hours. Correct me if I am wrong, but, if I use the example of what happened in the gymnasium, it is easy to conclude that, for all kinds of reasons that I do not want to hear about—I understand that it is part of the investigation—there was a forcible entry without a warrant. The police had no warrant allowing them to go into that place, arrest people and hold them for two, three and four days on charges of conspiracy... Mr. Gagnon, could you remind me of the charges?

• (1725)

Mr. Kevin Gagnon: The charges changed several times.

Mrs. Maria Mourani: What were the first ones?

Mr. Kevin Gagnon: I am not clear on that. It was not the same in French as it was in English. There was “unlawful assembly” and “taking part in a riot”. But I would like to add that, to start with, after going around the gymnasium, the police left after five minutes and told us “It’s okay, you can go back to sleep now.” Then they came back.

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Then they came back.

Mr. Kevin Gagnon: Yes.

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Can you charge people in a gymnasium where they have permission to sleep with unlawful assembly and conspiracy...

Mr. Kevin Gagnon: It was “taking part in a riot”.

Mrs. Maria Mourani: ...taking part in a riot? The people were asleep. What was this riot they took part in?

[English]

Chief William Blair: There had been a riot earlier. There was also a conspiracy. The law is rather complex. I’m not really qualified to explain it to you, but I will do my best.

First of all, a conspiracy is an agreement by two or more persons to engage in activity that is an indictable offence, and there must be acts in furtherance, in support of that. That’s what constitutes a conspiracy.

Let me be very clear about a warrant. First of all, the police in Canada have the authority under the Criminal Code to make an arrest with or without a warrant. If a warrant is issued by a judicial authority, we may execute that warrant. But a police officer may also arrest on reasonable and probable grounds that an offence has been committed. Under these circumstances—

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: But can you hold them for three or four days?

[English]

The Chair: No, Madame, your time is up. We’ll listen to the answer.

Chief William Blair: So on reasonable and probable grounds, a person can be arrested if a police officer believes an offence has been committed and this is the individual responsible. The law requires that this individual must be brought before a justice of the peace within 24 hours; it’s forthwith and within 24 hours. Once that is done, once the police satisfy that legal requirement to bring an offender before a justice of the peace, then the justice of the peace may remand that individual in custody for a period of time. That may be, with their consent, for an extended period of time, or for a shorter period of time, to enable a bail hearing to take place.

I have no direct experience on this, so you must forgive me—I want to qualify my comments—but I believe that’s what transpired in this case.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Blair.

Mr. Davies.

Mr. Don Davies: Thank you.

Monsieur Gagnon, do I have your testimony right that the police, when they entered the gym, had their guns drawn? Did any of the police have guns?

[Translation]

Mr. Kevin Gagnon: Yes, they certainly did. I think what they had were rifles firing rubber bullets. I am not really sure, I am not in the habit of getting arrested. They were pointing all kinds of rifles at us, the kind that fires rubber bullets.

[English]

Mr. Don Davies: Chief Blair, I know that you’ve repeatedly said that the proper place to complain about police behaviour is the independent police complaints commission. But I would imagine that as chief of police there’s also a number of things that you as chief want to know about if your officers are not complying with proper procedure.

You’ve already mentioned in terms of your rule about covering the.... You dealt with that. That wasn’t a complaint made to the complaints commission. Is that right?

Chief William Blair: Actually, there were complaints made to the public complaints commissioner—

Mr. Don Davies: I haven’t asked my question yet, sir. Can I ask my question?

Chief William Blair: —but he sent those complaints back to me to investigate.

Mr. Don Davies: Okay.

Do you have rules of engagement for when officers may draw their gun or not?

Chief William Blair: There are rules both in the Criminal Code and in our procedures.

Mr. Don Davies: Right. Can you tell us, in this situation with police going into a gymnasium of sleeping students, is that a proper situation in your view for officers to enter in with rifles and guns drawn?

Chief William Blair: All I can tell you is that it may be. It depends on what their reasonable apprehension is when going into those places, on what they’re expecting. You know, they have to do that job safely. Police officers do carry guns to effect a purpose, and the execution of a search warrant.... Over the course of my police career, I’ve executed many warrants. I’ve gone into many places to arrest people. If I believe that there may be armed persons there, then—

Mr. Don Davies: Chief, did any of the officers find any guns in that gymnasium?

Chief William Blair: To the best of my knowledge, no.

Mr. Don Davies: No.

Typically when police arrest people, many times they don’t draw their guns to arrest someone, do they?

Chief William Blair: Not in very many circumstances.

Mr. Don Davies: That’s right.

Chief William Blair: Everything depends on the circumstance.

Mr. Don Davies: Right.

You said that the rights of people to peacefully protest were compromised by a mob. I'd put to you, sir, that the rights of those 70 people in that University of Toronto gymnasium to protest were not compromised by any mob; they were compromised by the police officers who came in and arrested them.

Chief William Blair: And with respect, sir, I disagree.

• (1730)

Mr. Don Davies: You disagree with that?

Chief William Blair: Absolutely. I think the police officers have a responsibility, if they believe on reasonable probable grounds that people have committed a criminal offence, to bring those people before a justice. And that was done in this case.

Mr. Don Davies: And it doesn't concern you that not one of those charges even went to trial?

Chief William Blair: Well, I'm aware of the circumstances under which the Ministry of the Attorney General made a decision not to proceed. It was not on the absence of reasonable and probable grounds, but on a different criteria, which is a reasonable prospect of conviction.

I don't mean to minimize this, but because of a legal technicality they did not believe there was a reasonable prospect of conviction, and they made the appropriate decision not to prosecute under those circumstances.

Mr. Don Davies: And part of that was because of lack of warrants.

So after six hours of specialized training, as well as the fact that these are police officers who are trained in the law and are trained in when they need a warrant or not, it happened that this coordinated activity went into the University of Toronto gymnasium at six in the morning and no one thought they might need a warrant. Is that right?

Chief William Blair: Well, the Feeney warrant is something that's been ruled by the Supreme Court of Canada, and it normally pertains to entering into a residence to apprehend an individual. A Feeney warrant must be obtained before going in to do that, except under extraordinary circumstances, I assume. Again, you're asking me to speculate. This matter is being investigated by the OIPRD, and we'll see what the outcome is. But I assume that they believed it was not required because they—

Mr. Don Davies: Well, apparently they did believe that because they didn't have one, and apparently they were wrong, but—

Chief William Blair: Yes, apparently—

Mr. Don Davies: We had the largest mass arrest in Canadian history, sir. There were 1,100 people arrested. There were 900 of them dismissed without the crown even being able to proceed to trial. I'll tell you what it looks like to Canadians—

Chief William Blair: No, sir. What you've just said is incorrect.

Mr. Don Davies: Yes. There were 900 charges dismissed at first appearance.

Chief William Blair: No, sir. There were 900 people apprehended for breach of the peace—

Mr. Don Davies: Can I ask my question, please, sir?

What it looks like is that the police went in and arrested almost a thousand people. They didn't have sufficient evidence. They removed those people from the ability to protest. The summit finished. Then, when the charges had to come to court, 900 of them have been withdrawn, so—

Chief William Blair: With great respect, sir, what you're saying is not correct.

Mr. Don Davies: What's not correct about what I said, sir?

Chief William Blair: First of all, the overwhelming majority of the people who were apprehended were apprehended under the legislation to prevent a breach of the peace. There was never any expectation that there were charges against them—

Mr. Don Davies: Sir, what was said in the University of Toronto gym that morning?

Chief William Blair: I don't know. In the University of Toronto—

Mr. Don Davies: I was told that what was said was that they were being arrested for conspiracy to commit an indictable offence.

Chief William Blair: Sir—

Mr. Don Davies: That's what was read out in that gymnasium—not breach of peace, sir. And we'll have witnesses who'll testify to that later on in this committee.

Chief William Blair: And that's fine, sir, but your statement that 900—

Mr. Don Davies: Well, you're not correct, sir. You're not correct—

The Chair: Just let him finish.

Our time is basically up, but go ahead, Mr. Blair.

Chief William Blair: Your statement that 900 persons were arrested and then the charges were withdrawn is simply not true. The charges were withdrawn against the 60 or so persons who were arrested in that gymnasium. But when I say that what you're saying is not correct, it's your extrapolation that this same set of facts pertains to the 900, and that's simply not true.

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

Thanks to all of you for your attendance here today. As you know, we're going to continue on this study of the security at the G-8 and G-20. All of you being here—Mr. Gagnon, Mr. Beechey, Mr. Blair, and Mr. Giroux—has certainly helped us on that study, so we thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.

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