



House of Commons  
CANADA

# Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

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SECU • NUMBER 052 • 3rd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

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EVIDENCE

**Tuesday, February 8, 2011**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson**



## Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

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•(0845)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC)):** Good morning, everyone.

Welcome to meeting number 52 of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, Tuesday, February 8, 2011.

Before we introduce our guests this morning, I would like to remind our committee that we have a couple of reports we are going to be tabling in the House. They have yet to be written. So if you have recommendations or any text that you believe our analysts should be aware of, please get them in by February 14. That is with regard to the G-8 and G-20 summits and also the CSIS report.

February 28, Madame Mourani, we have the other report we were working on as well.

Also, with our two bills, Bill C-23B, we want to get the names of witnesses submitted. If you have people you would like to see appear before our committee, please try to get their names in as soon as possible. Those meetings are scheduled for March.

We have a prison study as well, so we will be looking for witnesses for that.

Today we have a briefing on the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Appearing before us we have, as an individual, Mike McDonell, former Royal Canadian Mounted Police Assistant Commissioner, now the commander of the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Ontario Provincial Police Detachment. And from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, we have Raf Souccar, Deputy Commissioner.

Our committee thanks both of you for responding to our call to appear. I understand that both of you have opening statements. Before we proceed, we would like to hear those opening statements, if you have some, and then we would go into the first and subsequent rounds of questioning after that.

Mr. McDonell.

**Inspector Mike McDonell (Former Royal Canadian Mounted Police Assistant Commissioner, Commander of the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Ontario Provincial Police Detachment, As an Individual):** I do not have an opening statement.

**The Chair:** All right.

Mr. Souccar.

**Deputy Commissioner Raf Souccar (Deputy Commissioner, Royal Canadian Mounted Police):** Good morning, Mr. Chair, honourable members of the committee.

[Translation]

It is a pleasure to be here this morning.

[English]

I'd like to thank you very much for inviting us here today to answer your questions and to set the record straight to the extent possible.

Let me start by saying that I'm hopeful, Mr. Chair, with the announcement this past Friday that Bill Elliott will be stepping down this summer, that the committee will be looking forward instead of backward.

That said, I recognize that the committee is interested in last summer's events, and therefore I am prepared to say a few words on this matter, after which Mike and I will be prepared to answer all your questions to the best of our knowledge and recollection.

I have been very concerned over the media attention the RCMP received this past summer on the internal issues inside the force. With respect to this matter, and specifically to Bill Elliott's behaviour, I wish to say that the behaviour issues were long-standing. I am aware of many members of the then senior executive committee who had tried to deal with Bill Elliott's behaviour by speaking with him individually. I know that I have spoken to him face to face on several occasions, as well as by e-mail, to try to get him to be more respectful in his dealings with the RCMP membership.

Unfortunately, although he acknowledged openly during senior executive committee meetings, as well as via force-wide broadcast to some 30,000 employees, that his behaviour and actions did have a negative impact on RCMP employees, he either refused to change or could not change.

I have to tell you that I had so many people complain to me about Bill Elliott's disrespectful behaviour that my very position required me to act. As a member of the senior executive committee in the RCMP, I could no longer point the finger at upper management and criticize them for their inaction. I was one of them, a member of the senior executive committee.

Mr. Chair, I looked at and I took my position very seriously and was not willing to stand by and watch two of our very core values—respect and compassion—be nothing more than words hanging on the walls in our buildings across Canada. When I and others got no results from speaking to Bill Elliott face to face, I was left with one option, and that was to speak to the very folks who put him in the position, to let them know that morale in the RCMP was sinking to an all-time low and that something had to be done. Someone had to stand up, and I chose to do so, along with others. I believed then, as I do now, that this was the right thing to do, the honourable thing to do, and in fact my duty to do.

RCMP employees deserve to be treated with respect. I want to make it very clear, Mr. Chair, and I want to be on record as saying this: I did not leak this matter to the media, and I did not directly or indirectly influence anyone to leak this matter to the media, and I was not responsible for the groundswell or media hype. In fact I have received numerous media inquiries, and to this date continue to receive them. I have not once returned any of these calls, as I was hopeful that this matter would be resolved swiftly, without bringing undue attention to the RCMP.

This is important for me to go on record as saying, Mr. Chair, for the following reasons. There were some who felt that this complaint against Bill Elliott was made for self-serving reasons and leaked to the media for that very purpose. On October 7, 2010, at 1500 hours, I met with Bill Elliott in his office. This was the first time that he informed me he would be removing me from my position as deputy commissioner of federal policing. At that time Bill Elliott said to me, and I quote, “You are widely seen as the person who brought this matter to the press”. I responded to that accusation by saying that I had no part in getting this out to the media and was prepared to take a polygraph test if there was any doubt in anyone's mind as to my truthfulness. And that offer still stands, Mr. Chair. In fact, I would invite any media person—and there are many here today—who has obtained any such information from me to step up and say so.

Mr. Chair, I have always spoken the truth without fear or favour, as I swore to do when I was engaged in the RCMP a little over 32 years ago, and I will continue to do so.

• (0850)

I should also tell you that the complaints lodged against Bill Elliott had absolutely nothing to do with the fact that he came to the RCMP as a civilian.

During his first three years as commissioner, we did not see one complaint against him from inside the RCMP. Although his behaviour was the same from day one as it is now, we chose to work with him and support him, instead of complaining about him. Three years later, with nothing changed and his behaviour getting worse by the day, it boiled over and resulted in the situation that we found ourselves in this past summer.

I can tell you that there were many more employees, police officers, civilian members, and public servants who wanted to stand up and speak. Many did. However, once they saw what happened to me, many backed off, fearing that they would be removed from their positions the way I was.

I felt it important to provide this background, as I felt that my integrity and motives, as well as those of others, were being questioned. In any event, with the announcement this past Friday, I'm hoping that this is now behind us and we can focus on the future, rather than looking back.

If the RCMP is to progress, governance and management of the force will have to be key issues for the government. The RCMP needs to become better, stronger, more transparent, and able to adjust more quickly to the unpredictable nature of police work. One example is the creation of a board of management that can assist and even challenge the commissioner on non-operational matters.

This was a recommendation made in 2007 by the task force on governance and cultural change in the RCMP. It was later supported by the reform implementation council. I dare say that if a board of management had been in place, this whole affair of last summer would not have happened.

The other important requirement for the RCMP to be successful is for it to gain autonomy from government in financial and human resources. In order to do that, a separate employer status is undoubtedly the preferred option.

The RCMP Act will also need to be amended to allow for a swifter discipline process. In other words, we need the ability to get rid of the bad apples in a shorter timeframe.

In respect of civilian oversight, although we have made some progress in the investigation of serious incidents involving RCMP members, the introduction of Bill C-38 and the creation of an independent civilian review and complaints body with more power would be an improvement and go a long way towards accountability and transparency.

The RCMP's next commissioner will have to be a strong leader who can rally the troops, someone everybody can believe in and support.

As to whether this person should be a civilian or a police officer, there no longer appears to be a debate on this question. The next commissioner should be a police officer. That person does not necessarily have to be a member of the RCMP. However, knowledge of the RCMP, given its size and diverse mandate, would be a huge asset.

I'm hopeful that the RCMP can put forward at least a half-dozen strong candidates. Failure to do that would reflect poorly on our officer development efforts over the last three years.

The position of RCMP commissioner is by no means an easy one. In fact, it is likely one of the most difficult positions to hold, because of the size and diverse mandate of the organization. In addition, modern policing is very complex, and problems often arise.

The sign of a strong leader will be how this person deals with problems as they arise, along with the level of accountability, transparency, and willingness to admit to errors when they occur. Corrective measures would then have to be implemented and communicated to the public.

The next commissioner will also have to be secure enough in his or her position to be able to listen to what others have to say, and not be afraid of being challenged. In the end, strong leadership will win the day.

• (0855)

[Translation]

That concludes my presentation, Mr. Chair.

Mr. McDonell and I would be happy to answer the committee's questions.

[English]

Thank you.

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

We'll proceed to the first round of questioning. Mr. Holland.

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

Thank you to the witnesses. And thank you particularly to Mr. Souccar. I'm sure that was not an easy presentation to make.

Let me start with the question of whether you think anything would have changed if we hadn't found out how dysfunctional things were within the commissioner's office.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I'm not sure I follow your question. If things would have changed—what things?

**Mr. Mark Holland:** In the sense that.... Maybe it's a bit of a hypothetical. Let me go to another question.

One of the things I'm concerned about in searching for a new commissioner is that what you're describing is almost a culture of fear. People were afraid to come forward and speak their mind and give objective criticism.

You said that things got worse and worse, and yet there was no change; there was no intervention. I'm wondering if you can describe to us what that environment was. Because on a go-forward basis certainly we want to make sure it doesn't take something going public before we get change if things are not going well.

Can you give us a bit of a sense...? When you said things were getting worse and worse and action wasn't being taken, how were you trying to make those changes? How were others trying to make those changes known? What process could we have in place that would ensure that when things are that dysfunctional there's action taken?

• (0900)

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** The difficulty in this instance was that the person being complained against was the Commissioner of the RCMP—the number one in the organization. Ideally you work things out inside the organization. You lock the doors, you sit down, you look each other in the eye and you deal with matters face to face.

That was tried. I know it was tried by me. I know it was tried by many other senior managers in the organization, to the point that it left no option but to go outside the organization, to the very people who put him in.

Whether things would have changed or not.... Again, it's hypothetical, because it took the course that it did. Other efforts had been tried and failed.

**Mr. Mark Holland:** You characterize the situation as getting worse and worse day by day. Can you give us a sense of what you mean by that?

Secondly, if things were getting that bad, and the only person above.... Obviously it's a political decision; it's the minister's office. Were there attempts to make the minister aware of how dysfunctional things were within the force?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** Things got worse by the number of individuals, including senior managers, who would walk into my office to complain, some in tears. I've heard comments made about intimidation. Bill Elliott did not intimidate—at least the police officers in the RCMP—but the abuse was there, the humiliation, the public humiliation. And I say public.... I come from a school where you chastise in private and you praise in public. So if there is any chastising to take place, do it behind closed doors; don't embarrass people publicly.

The number of complaints that were coming to me increased. The attempts to bring this to the open were made. The first one was made by retired Senior Deputy Commissioner Sweeney during an exit interview. This is what in fact got the ball rolling. The statements were made during an exit interview. A phone call was then made to me, and I answered truthfully.

Mike may also have a comment to make with respect to his attempt to obtain an exit interview.

**Insp Mike McDonell:** I did in fact request an exit interview when I announced my retirement from the RCMP, and I was denied that privilege. I felt from my experience on the senior management team and what I had viewed as perhaps the neutering of the senior management team that I needed to speak up. Being responsible for RCMP operations in Ontario, I felt that I needed to speak up with respect to some operational matters.

**Mr. Mark Holland:** And you would agree with Mr. Souccar's assessment that things were getting worse day by day, that the environment was abusive and not conducive to getting business done?

**Insp Mike McDonell:** I felt that senior management members were not respected for their opinion and that there was no debate, especially if someone put forward a contrarian opinion.

As a member of the senior management team, if a point was raised that we wished to discuss, things like advancing the change agenda within the RCMP.... It actually happened, and I did speak to the commissioner about it. Members raised the issue that it wasn't moving fast enough, and the commissioner quickly took over the lectern and very passionately admonished everybody in the room, described what the change was, and said "That's it. So from here on in the company line is change is moving fast enough", to which the rolled shoulders went. I described it as the battered wife syndrome, writ large.

**Mr. Mark Holland:** The reason I ask this next question is that about three years ago, when Mr. Elliott came into that position, the RCMP was in a difficult place. There were series of recommendations, including Brown's report, with very specific recommendations. We obviously had Justice O'Connor's recommendations, supported by Iacobucci. We had Paul Kennedy's comments and recommendations. Some of them happened either then or during his tenure and yet they didn't go anywhere.

So I guess the question is, what was the next process? When you're feeling that frustration, do you have comments and exit interviews?

Mr. Souccar, you were interviewed. Did you go somewhere next to try to address this? How did you deal with it after these things continued to escalate and change was not happening within the force?

• (0905)

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

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** Well, I wouldn't say that change was not taking place in the RCMP. Change was taking place in the RCMP, and in fact many of Mr. Brown's 49 recommendations have been dealt with. The issue was the speed at which change was taking place.

There was a bit of resistance to taking risks—a little bit of a risk-averse nature of Mr. Elliott—and to move forward with changes, but change was taking place and has been taking place over the last three years. But it was not moving as fast as we wanted it to move.

Regionalization was an issue that was on the table from day one. I know that Bill Sweeney, prior to retirement, along with a consultant from outside the organization—an ex-member, in fact—had worked out a model of regionalization and how to deal with it. It would have been great to have Bill Sweeney around, given that he was the one who was spearheading this, to meet with and discuss the future in terms of our regions. Unfortunately, the meetings never took place. I met with Bill Sweeney, saying that “it would be great for us to be discussing this while you're still in the force”. It never took place and he ended up retiring.

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

We'll now move to Madame Mourani. *Madame Mourani, vous avez sept minutes.*

[Translation]

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

Good morning, Mr. Souccar and Mr. McDonell. I very much appreciate your being here. I also appreciate your honesty. I want to make that clear.

I would like to begin with a point of clarification. As soon as news of all this broke, I made a number of requests to bring both of you before the committee, and I can tell you it took a long time.

According to the information I received, Mr. McDonell, you did not want to appear. In your case, Mr. Souccar, it was not very clear where things stood. I had to issue a summons in order for you to appear. And here you are today, being very open and honest with us. I am trying to understand what happened. Were you threatened? Did

Commissioner Elliot threaten you or ask you not to appear before the committee?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** Thank you very much for your question.

No, no one threatened me with respect to my appearing before the committee. However, when the RCMP receives an invitation to appear, the commissioner decides who will go before the committee. The commissioner decided, as he clearly stated during his most recent appearance—on November 30, I believe—to appear before the committee with the members of the executive committee. I believe there was Al Nause, Tim Killam and Alain Séguin. It was his decision to appear along with his team.

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** We asked that Mr. Elliot appear, and we also asked that you appear. But I fully understand that Mr. Elliott made the decision to appear himself, without taking into account that we had specifically requested your presence.

As for you, Mr. McDonell, we were told that you did not wish to appear before the committee.

**Insp Mike McDonell:** I belong to another police organization, and it is not for me to comment on what happens within a different organization. That was the reason.

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** I understand that. I just wanted to make sure that no one had put any undue pressure on you.

In addition, when you said earlier—and I think Mr. McDonell mentioned it, as well—that there was a lack of respect for senior management, that when you made suggestions on how to make the RCMP more effective and efficient, a directive came down from Mr. Elliott essentially prohibiting any dialogue. And, needless to say, the attitude was quite negative.

In your view, was Mr. Elliott there to implement the government's orders? Was he put in that position to carry out the Conservative government's agenda?

• (0910)

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** He was selected as the RCMP commissioner, and the decisions made within the organization are ultimately his. You are asking me whether the commissioner's decisions were partisan. That is for him to say; I cannot speak for him.

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** The best example I can give to show you what I mean is the gun registry. The RCMP—not you—clearly stated it was in favour of keeping the registry. We did not hear much from Mr. Elliott on that.

Was the gun registry a source of friction—one of many, for that matter—within the organization under this commissioner, who may have been in favour of scrapping it?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I think it is up to the government to decide whether the gun registry should be scrapped or not.

The RCMP's role was simply to show the advantages and disadvantages of the gun registry. I believe the person in charge at the time, Chief Superintendent Marty Cheliak, presented the pros and cons of the registry.

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** I bet Mr. Cheliak is no longer in the same position.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** No, he was transferred to language training.

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** In your view, were the reasons for the transfer innocent, or would you say, based on your information—and I am certain you have spoken to Mr. Cheliak and you do have that information—that Mr. Cheliak was transferred precisely because he demonstrated to this committee that the registry worked?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I know the position Marty Cheliak held was a bilingual one requiring the person in it to be bilingual. I also know that Marty Cheliak is not bilingual.

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** I believe there are many members of the RCMP who are not bilingual but who stay in their positions all the same, is that not right?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** That program is now under the direction of Deputy Commissioner Tim Killam, so he may know more than I do. I have no other information on that. I had such a large area of responsibility that I had little time to worry about anything else.

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** Mr. McDonell, on July 21, you sent the public safety minister a long letter in which you complained about Mr. Elliott. In particular, you said in the letter that the commissioner was not very involved in the G20 operations. I believe he visited the troops the day before the event began.

Could you tell us exactly what you criticized Commissioner Elliott for in that letter?

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. McDonell.

[Translation]

**Insp Mike McDonell:** I did not sign that letter; nor did I send it.

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** It has your name and your signature. You are Mike McDonell, are you not?

**Insp Mike McDonell:** I did not send that letter.

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** You did not send the letter that you, yourself, signed?

**Insp Mike McDonell:** In August? No.

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** In July.

**Insp Mike McDonell:** Forgive me. In July, yes.

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** This is your signature, is it not?

**Insp Mike McDonell:** Yes, there are two letters. That one is mine, yes.

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** Could you please tell us what this letter says?

**Insp Mike McDonell:** I have a copy here.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madame Mourani.

You may answer this question, and then we're out of time. The question was what is in the letter?

**Insp Mike McDonell:** The theme, starting off, was the erosion of public confidence in the force. An agency usually adopts the character of the leader. The work and spirit of the membership follows that of the leader.

I gave as the reason for the letter the good of the force. I felt it my obligation to the members of the RCMP and the citizens of Canada to share my observations.

I described the management style that I felt was impeding the force. Certainly the senior members were disengaged, and then that cascaded down through the ranks. I spoke of interference in operations. And I also spoke of the partnership-building that's required of senior police leaders.

• (0915)

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

Mr. Davies, please.

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Deputy Commissioner Souccar and Commander McDonell, I want to start by thanking both of you on behalf of all Canadians for the courage and the integrity you have shown throughout.

I think what is crystal clear is that your actions in speaking out on behalf of the force that you clearly have devoted so much of your careers to and care so much about are really starting to help restore Canadians' confidence back in the RCMP, where Canadians want it to be.

I want to start with Deputy Commissioner Souccar. You said in your testimony that you described Mr. Elliott's behaviour as long-standing. You said so many people complained about Mr. Elliott's disrespectful behaviour, and you described morale as sinking to an all-time low. My first question is, when did the Minister of Public Safety become aware of these factors, to your knowledge?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I want to thank you for your initial comments. The RCMP is extremely important to me. I have a son who is a member of the RCMP. My wife is employed by the RCMP. That's the only job I really ever had, and I care deeply for the RCMP, as I know Mike does.

This whole affair has been extremely difficult on me, it's been extremely difficult on my wife, and has been hugely difficult on my son as a police officer in the RCMP. So this wasn't done lightly, wasn't taken lightly. It was very difficult to stand up. But courage of convictions has to prevail at the end of the day.

In terms of your question as to when the minister would have become aware of this, I never spoke to the Minister of Public Safety on this matter. The people I spoke to were Patricia Hassard at the Privy Council Office, Marie-Lucie Morin, who is the national security advisor, and Deputy Minister Bill Baker at the Department of Public Safety.

**Mr. Don Davies:** When, sir, did you notify the Privy Council Office of these concerns, to the best of your knowledge?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I have the exact dates. I can dig them up, but I would say in the first week of July.

**Mr. Don Davies:** Of 2010?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** Of 2010. That's when I would have received a call from Patricia Hassard. I was on vacation at the time, on holidays. In fact I was just about to go to brunch with my wife, and I was waiting at the front porch and my phone went off and it was the PCO; it was Patricia Hassard. She wanted to speak to me about that. She told me her dad was ill and she would have to leave to go to London, but Marie-Lucie Morin, who is the national security advisor, wanted to speak with me. I said I'd be available, and within an hour, while at brunch, I received a call from Marie-Lucie Morin.

**Mr. Don Davies:** That's the national security advisor to the Prime Minister?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** Yes.

**Mr. Don Davies:** Thank you.

I want to move on if I could. I have a few questions.

Commander McDonell, last October you wrote to Minister Toews saying that those who came forward to voice their concerns "have simply become sacrificial lambs".

Deputy Commissioner Souccar, I think you've testified quite frankly today, implying that it's very difficult to speak up in the force when you have a difference of opinion.

And Carleton University Professor Linda Duxbury, who studies the culture of the RCMP, has said, "You're not going to get successful change if the people doing the work don't feel comfortable speaking up."

To this day, are you aware whether the Minister of Public Safety has issued any directive or position to the members of the force to reassure officers of their abilities to voice their concerns? Are you aware of any memo to that effect or any direction from the Minister of Public Safety?

• (0920)

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** Not to my knowledge.

Mike.

**Insp Mike McDonell:** I'm no longer a member of the RCMP, so I can't answer that question.

**Mr. Don Davies:** Sure.

There was a workplace assessment done by former CSIS director Reid Morden, and he found, among other things, that the slow pace of reforms frustrated some Mounties. I think you both already touched on that.

We know that the labour relations reform that was necessitated by the Ontario Supreme Court decision in MacDonnell—no relation, I take it—in June 2010.... It was introduced by this government in June 2010. The civilian oversight of complaints against the police, Bill C-38, was introduced in June 2010, and there's been no movement by this government since then as those two bills languish on the order paper.

I wonder if you could comment on how important you think it is to start uplifting the morale of the force that those two pieces of legislation be brought forward and passed?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** Well, I think it's important in times of change, and the RCMP certainly is in times of change. Change has to

be a constant. As soon as you stop changing, you're stagnating. You need to always look to improve the organization.

In terms of these two items, I think labour relations is an important one. We have a staff relations representative program. We have the association. I think at some point we'll need to move forward.

I'm not the best person to speak on that topic. Our deputy in human resources would probably be best versed to speak on those issues.

Certainly when you have an organization in need of change, the pace of change has to speed up. That was one of the issues that was raised: the pace of change has been very slow.

**Mr. Don Davies:** Commander McDonell, you have a quote where you referred to the "endemic level of sycophantism that is occurring amongst the commissioner's senior management team". That's how you described it.

I'm wondering how important it is, in both of your views, that there be a process of promoting from within that would not rely on sycophantism but would be more of a merit-based process. In your views, how important is getting a hold on that issue to the success of the next RCMP commissioner?

**Insp Mike McDonell:** I've always thought, as a leader, that it was good to surround yourself with people who did not think like you or who had a different experience so that the decisions at the end of the day were well informed and looked at from different views. I've always enjoyed a good challenge. I found that the challenge process was muted with my experience on the senior management team.

**Mr. Don Davies:** I'm sorry, you said "was muted"?

**Insp Mike McDonell:** Yes.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** If I may add to this, I think the ability to speak truth to power, and the environment that must be created in order to speak truth to power, is essential.

Secondly, as Mike said, and I will maybe elaborate on it a bit, if a leader in any organization is not willing to listen to different points of views from his or her own, then they don't need anybody around them.

As far as I'm concerned, I appreciate a challenge; I appreciate a different point of view. At the end of the day, the leader will make the decision. That's a given. But you're best equipped if you've been given various options, hopefully ones you have not thought of, that are different from your mindset, so that at the end of the day you as a leader can make the ultimate decision knowing you've explored all the options. To not have that...you don't need anybody else around you.

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

We'll now move to the government. Mr. Rathgeber.

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

And thank you to both witnesses for your attendance here this morning.

I understand you're both here under summons.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** That's correct.



**Mr. Brent Rathgeber:** Mr. McDonnell?

**Insp Mike McDonell:** Yes.

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber:** And it was the opposition parties that summoned your attendance here this morning? Or did the summons come from the clerk?

• (0925)

**The Chair:** The summons came from the clerk.

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber:** Thank you.

Deputy Commissioner Souccar, you talked about the importance of respect and compassion. I think you cited in your opening comments that they are core values of the RCMP. Did I hear that correctly?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** That's correct.

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber:** And you'll agree with me that respect is a bilateral relationship; it goes up and down the chain of command.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber:** I'm curious about something. You're here in your uniform. You are the deputy commissioner of the RCMP. But no less than 10 or 12 times in your opening comments, you referred to the commissioner as Bill Elliott. Do you believe that's appropriate? Is that showing due respect for him and his office, since he is still your commander and your superior officer?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** That's his name, and that's what I called him by.

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber:** So you're comfortable with men and women under your charge referring to you as Raf Souccar?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber:** Okay.

Do you believe that internal staffing and management practices of the RCMP are best resolved in private, or are they best aired in public?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** In private.

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber:** Mr. McDonnell?

**Insp Mike McDonell:** In private.

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber:** Then, Mr. McDonnell, why write a letter on July 21, 2010, which we've talked about, outlining many, many concerns and alleged deficiencies in Commissioner Elliott's management style—everything from partnership building with other police forces, to his alleged lack of operational awareness and knowledge, and of course his management style?

Why was that addressed to the Minister of Public Safety? Why wasn't that handled internally with your superiors within the RCMP?

**Insp Mike McDonell:** I had asked for that privilege. I had asked for an exit interview, and I was denied that right. At the time, I felt that we were at a critical time and that someone needed to speak up.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** May I also add to that, given that you've thrown the question out?

This was not the avenue of first recourse. As I said earlier, this was an extremely difficult, uncharacteristic thing for me and others to do. I'll tell you what I told Mr. Morden, and that was that you're welcome to look at my personnel file or the file of any others who

have stood up, and you will find nothing, in over 33 years of service, to resemble this.

As you said, this was a matter that was best handled in private. It was attempted. It was tried on numerous occasions through face-to-face contact, by e-mail, and by telephone, and it failed. It got to the point that things, as I said, had gotten so bad that I could no longer point the finger at others for their inaction. I was one of them. I was on the senior executive committee, along with the commissioner, and someone had to act. Somebody had to stand up. Standing up was not an easy thing.

**Insp Mike McDonell:** If I may go further, prior to sending this letter I had met with the deputy minister and had spoken to him with respect to these matters. I had put it to the deputy minister that I was willing to put it on paper. I also met with the chair of the reform implementation committee and did the same. That letter was sent sometime after both of those meetings.

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber:** Your letter of July 21, 2010—I'm looking at a copy—had four stated copies. Were there others? You indicate that it was sent to the national security advisor, the Deputy Minister of Public Safety, the President of the Treasury Board, and the chair of the RCMP reform implementation council. Was the distribution list longer than that?

**Insp Mike McDonell:** No, it was not.

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber:** There were no blind carbon copies.

**Insp Mike McDonell:** No, there were not.

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber:** So you don't know how this ended up in the hands of the media.

**Insp Mike McDonell:** No, I do not.

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber:** I know that it's not marked personal and confidential. Is that correct?

**Insp Mike McDonell:** That's correct.

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber:** Deputy Commissioner Souccar, you made reference to the Brown report and the 49 recommendations. I think you indicated that many of them have already been implemented. Was that your testimony?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** Yes. I can't tell you offhand how many, but I believe, if my recollection serves me right, that somewhere in the neighbourhood of half of them have either been acted upon or are in the process of being acted upon.

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber:** Do you agree that those are positive changes that will lead to better morale and better oversight and an all round better Royal Canadian Mounted Police?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I would agree that going ahead with the recommendations and with the recommendations that in fact were implemented goes some way to making the organization better. Absolutely.

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber:** Right. But I also understand from what you said to Mr. Holland that you were frustrated with the rate of change or the lack of timeliness, in your view. You wanted quicker reform. Did I understand that correctly?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** It was the pace, yes.

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber:** The RCMP and the North-West Mounted Police date back to the late 19th century. Is it really realistic to expect overnight change in a force that old and that big and that has so many perceived problems?

•(0930)

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** You're right to the extent that it is sometimes not easy, but I would divide change into perhaps two categories, one being change over which we, the RCMP, have control and others over which we do not have control. Government has to implement some changes, such as border management, review of the RCMP Act, and so on. And you can see how these items can take a longer period of time.

However, items of change over which we have control, such as regionalization and succession planning, could move a lot more quickly.

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber:** You both indicated that you support Bill C-38 and the civilian oversight that's contemplated in that bill.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** Yes.

**Insp Mike McDonell:** I'm not familiar with the bill.

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber:** Okay. You will agree with me that Commissioner Elliott also supports civilian oversight.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** Yes.

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber:** Thank you. Those are my questions.

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

We'll move to Mr. Kania.

**Mr. Andrew Kania (Brampton West, Lib.):** Sir, you indicated that these problems began at the beginning, when Mr. Elliott came in and became commissioner. And you indicated that for approximately three years you chose to work with him, although these were continuing. Then, the way I take it, after about three years, enough was enough. Does that essentially summarize it?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** It boiled over, if you will.

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** How many complaints were made against Mr. Elliott? How many different individuals?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I have no idea how many complaints were made against Bill Elliott. They would not all have been made to me. Some were made to me. Some were made to others within the senior executive.

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** But when people make complaints, is it in writing?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I'm not aware of any complaints being made in writing about Bill Elliott. There may very well have been some. I'm aware of one where there was a threat of a complaint being put in writing, and it was eventually not put in writing, but I couldn't tell you whether there were any eventually that were put in writing.

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** Is there any number you can give for a minimum number? More than 20? More than 50?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I really don't know.

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** What's the nature of these? What's the complaint? Is it verbal abuse? Is that essentially it? Is it threats? What were these?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** Yes.

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** Both?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** Both, as well as very dismissive, somewhat disrespectful.... Not somewhat—disrespectful. You know

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** I'm sorry to interrupt you. I only have five minutes.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** Yes.

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** It's sort of a dividing line: you can have the way you say things, you can be disrespectful or abusive, and then you can say things that are not logical or are irresponsible in terms of the operations of the force. Are you saying it was the first, the second, or both?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** No, no. Bill Elliott is not irresponsible. He's smart; he's a smart person. It's the interpersonal skills. I guess quality lacks, and that has offended many members and caused morale to go down. But in terms of his—

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** Can you give an example?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** He wouldn't have intentionally done anything to harm the operations of the organization and so on. I believe his heart was in the right place. I believe that everything he did, he tried to do for the good of the organization.

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** Can you give an example of a complaint?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I will maybe just leave it to individuals, many individuals who have complained over the disrespectful manner in which they were dealt with, embarrassed, humiliated, in a setting such as a group of the number here.

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** This July 25, 2010 letter that you signed, was this the first public gesture or act that you did with respect to this?

•(0935)

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** July 25...?

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** There's a letter, July 25, 2010.... That was Mr. McDonell. Sorry.

Was that the first public outcry with respect to these?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I'm not sure how you define "public", but the first time that the complaint went outside the organization was in early July, and the first person was to Patricia Hassard of PCO.

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** And you mentioned that.

Now, before that call to Patricia Hassard, had either of you met with any government official, including the deputy minister or otherwise, and expressed these concerns at any point during that three-year period of time leading up to that call to Patricia Hassard?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** No. And in fact every attempt was made through the first three years, despite issues, to support Bill Elliott. I know Senior Deputy Commissioner Sweeney had been working very closely with him. I know Deputy Commissioner Peter Martin, who has passed away, also dealt with him on this matter. I know Deputy Commissioner Tim Killam tried working with him. Every senior member of the senior executive committee that I know of has tried talking with him about these issues to be able to deal with them in private.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Souccar and Mr. Kania.

We'll now move to Madame Mourani.

Oh, I'm sorry. No, I'm sorry, it's Mr. MacKenzie. How could I do that?

I apologize to you, Madame Mourani. We will come to you.

Go ahead.

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

That's Inspector Killam, now with the Ontario Provincial Police?

**Insp Mike McDonell:** That's correct.

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie:** Yes.

I am a little bit concerned about referring to the commissioner by his name. I don't want to be disrespectful to Deputy Commissioner Souccar, but I notice you've referred to everybody else by their rank within the Ontario Provincial Police, of which you're now a member. I expect you would refer to your commissioner as Commissioner Lewis in the OPP.

**Insp Mike McDonell:** If I'm referring to him within my office I refer to him as Commissioner Lewis, but I speak to him as Chris.

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie:** Absolutely. I have a little bit of background, and certainly as a chief you expect to talk to your people frequently on a first-name basis, but publicly you refer to the individual by his rank?

**Insp Mike McDonell:** Yes.

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie:** Yes, okay.

We had Deputy Commissioner Killam here back on November 29, 2010, and you may be aware of that. He indicated there's a grievance procedure. He was not part of any formal grievance in any way, shape, or form. He explained his position with respect to the commissioner—sometimes he's blunt—and they addressed themselves in a similar manner.

He says it's done in a professional, straightforward, frank way, and going outside of that is not useful for anyone, in particular, the organization. He had an opportunity to tell us something, but his story was a little different.

I respect your opinions, but is it fair to say that not everybody shared the same opinions within the organization? Deputy Commissioner Killam's opinion may not have been shared by everyone else, nor would your opinions have been shared by....

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** You may need to clarify your question for me. I'm not sure exactly which opinion you're referring to.

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie:** When we heard Deputy Commissioner Killam he didn't indicate he had any issues with respect to the commissioner, and all I'm saying is that not everybody's opinion in any organization is always the same. There are those who have one opinion and someone else has another opinion. Is that a fair assessment?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I can answer this question. I don't know exactly what Tim Killam said during his testimony here, but I do know that Tim Killam and I have had many conversations, and there was no light between us. Our opinions were identical.

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie:** All right. He said something different to the committee, but that's fair enough.

The other thing is my colleague asked about the minister providing a directive to the members of the organization. Do you see that a political body should provide direction to the members of the RCMP in any way, shape, or form?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** We have ministerial directives that are received—

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie:** That are directed to...?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** To the RCMP: ministerial directives on a number of issues, national security matters, and so on. In fact, Mike can maybe speak about that; he was in charge of national security at one point. Ministerial directives do come in from time to time, but in terms of operational direction, absolutely not. There should not be any directive issued operationally.

• (0940)

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie:** Right. And if we go back to previous commissioners when there were issues, one of the issues was during what's been termed the sponsorship scandal, that there were issues about moneys being moved, I believe it was.... I can't recall exactly, but it was moneys being moved that somehow got associated with that issue. Is it fair enough to say that was an issue a number of years ago?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** Yes, vaguely. I don't know all the details. At the time I was not involved in that specific area of policing. However, yes, I vaguely recall what you're saying.

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie:** I think it's fair enough to say that whatever that was, there was some kind of political involvement in the organization that probably should not have occurred.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I'm afraid I can't answer that.

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie:** Okay.

When Commissioner Elliott was appointed, everything was not, as we would say, 100% within the organization. I think in the July 21 letter there's some indication there had been issues that had brought the RCMP some negative opinions, among them the pension issue and so on.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** No. It wasn't then, and it's not now.

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie:** No, but there were divisions then, within the organization. People felt that things were not right, because their pension money was being used for other purposes?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** Yes.

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

We'll now move back to Mr. Holland.

**Mr. Mark Holland:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We saw a lot of movement out of senior management. I'm wondering if the conditions you described led a number of people to be forced out, or were people leaving voluntarily? How did those changes come about?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I'm not aware of anyone who was forced out.

**Mr. Mark Holland:** I'm speaking in a less direct sense. I'm saying conditions were such that people who otherwise would have stayed decided they couldn't deal with the situation and walked away. I'm wondering about that.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** You're absolutely right. I know of some members who left much too early because they felt that they needed to move on to something else, given the situation inside the RCMP. I'm aware of some who were close to retirement but could have stuck around for an extra year or two, and others who retired simply because it was time to retire. They reached their 35 years and they had plans to retire. I think there's a combination of all three.

**Mr. Mark Holland:** How did the turmoil, the tumult, affect morale and the ability of people to do their job?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** You mean the retirements, or the situation that existed?

**Mr. Mark Holland:** I'm talking about the situation with the commissioner, the situation you were describing as being abusive and disrespectful. How did that affect morale and the ability of people to do their job?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** It affects morale to the extent that over 33 years, I, and I assume others, have found it fun to come to work. If I had to do it all over again, policing is what I would want to do. It's a great job. It's a challenging job, and there's no reason for not being able to enjoy coming to work. We don't necessarily deal with pleasant issues every day, but we choose to do that and it's the nature of the beast. When it gets to a point that you have people saying it's just not fun coming to work any more, it's time to move on.

**Mr. Mark Holland:** Would you go further than that? Was it getting to the point where it was toxic at the end of that three years?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** It was becoming toxic, morale was starting to dwindle, and the interaction was not respectful.

• (0945)

**Mr. Mark Holland:** There have been a number of appointments recently to the senior management team, and those appointments have not received order-in-council approval yet, so they haven't been installed, as I understand it. If we're looking at having a new commissioner, talk to me about that process.

How important is it for a new commissioner to be able to come in and put people in place that the commissioner believes can carry out the necessary changes? In other words, how important is it to ensure that those order-in-council appointments don't proceed, so that the new commissioner has the opportunity to start with a clean slate?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I suppose it's no different from when Brian Burke took over the Toronto Maple Leafs as general manager and he made a bunch of trades.

If you come into an organization, ideally you can bring your own team in. But unfortunately, that's not the way things work. There are police chiefs who are named around the country on a regular basis, and they inherit teams they have to work with. In this instance, potentially a new commissioner can work with the people who are already in place. But his views may be different, and he may want a different team. I think it's going to depend on the next person coming in, and whether he or she can work with the people in place.

**Mr. Mark Holland:** But we don't want to get a carry-forward. Obviously there has been division, and there are problems. Isn't it important for the government to ensure that those order-in-council appointments don't go forward so that the commissioner has as much flexibility as possible? Would that be a fair characterization?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** My view is that a commissioner should be picking at least his or her direct reports.

**Mr. Mark Holland:** Mr. McDonell, you didn't have the opportunity to give some specific examples of things for the purposes of illustrating what was being dealt with. For example, if you had the opportunity today to do that exit interview, what are some of the specific examples that you would want to give that underscore your concerns more broadly?

**The Chair:** Very quickly; our time is up here already.

**Insp Mike McDonell:** I think the most important example, as I mentioned, is the muting of the senior management team and that there was no contrary opinion entertained and just the browbeating of the committee. I did tell the commissioner that it was a waste of my time to attend the senior management team meetings, that I should be back with my people.

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

We'll move to Mr. Norlock, please.

**Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC):** Thank you very much.

Thank you very much to the witnesses for appearing.

**The Chair:** I am sorry, Mr. Norlock.

Madame Mourani, go ahead.

[Translation]

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

[English]

**The Chair:** I tried to give you the position earlier, and now I took it away, so I apologize. Go ahead.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** Okay, thank you.

I want to come back to what you were saying, Mr. Souccar. The issues with Mr. Elliott's personality and interpersonal relationships aside, I have a really hard time believing that Mr. Elliott was not there to impose the government's agenda, especially given what Mr. McDonell just said about senior management being muzzled and having no freedom.

Why would Mr. Elliott have muzzled senior management if he did not have an agenda? And that agenda was not his. He was appointed by the government, and he was put in that position to carry out the government's agenda. So I have a really hard time believing that you, the deputy commissioner, who worked very closely with him, who knows everything about the organization's structure, did not detect any interference by the government.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I think that is a question that should be put to the commissioner, not me.

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** Give me your opinion.

[English]

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I believe, as I said earlier, that Bill Elliott is a very intelligent man. His intentions were always in the right place, as far as I'm concerned. It was more of a question as to how he went about accomplishing his goals and objectives. Whether or not

[Translation]

his decisions were based on the government's will, I do not know. I do not know what he talked about with the minister or the Prime Minister.

• (0950)

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** I understand all that. But interpersonal relationships aside, he was supposed to put forward ideas. He put forward ideas and an agenda you may not necessarily have been in full agreement with. Give me one idea Mr. Elliott brought to the RCMP that you did not agree with, just one.

[English]

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I'm sorry, I can't think of one item that Commissioner Elliott wanted to bring to the RCMP. Something may come to me later—I'm blank right now—but that wasn't the issue as much as how quickly things—

[Translation]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** I will ask you again. We are allowed to ask more questions later on. Think about it, and you can tell me later.

Now I would like to come back to your letter, Mr. McDonell. In the letter you wrote to the minister, you said that, during the G20, the Minister of National Defence and the Minister of Public Safety visited the site, but that your commissioner waited until June 23 to tell you that he wanted to visit four locations. You also said you found it quite astonishing that the Commissioner of the RCMP, the person directly responsible for certain operations, showed up at the last minute.

Is that not a sign of total incompetence? I think so, but do you? Or is it the behaviour of someone who is completely out of touch with reality?

[English]

**Insp Mike McDonell:** I wouldn't classify it as incompetence. My opinion is that it was poor judgment.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** Great. Thank you very much.

Now I want to ask you something, Mr. Souccar. As the deputy commissioner, you represent a government organization. Even

though you are not the commissioner, you still more or less represent the organization. I showed Commissioner Elliott an RCMP document on human trafficking in Canada. It talked about people who were exploited and sex-trade workers, as if the women and young girls being trafficked were workers.

Do you see them as workers or exploited individuals?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** They are exploited individuals, no doubt about it.

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** Very well.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I remember the discussion on that. The reason it may be referred to as work has to do with the fact that these individuals are exploited doing that work, but it is not legitimate work.

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** I understand. Well, I am trying to understand, but it is not very logical.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madame Mourani.

We'll now move to Mr. Norlock.

**Mr. Rick Norlock:** Once again, thank you to the witnesses for appearing.

Let me say right from the start that I understand, having served in a police force that Inspector McDonell now serves with and for, the tremendous personal toll this takes when a police officer must appear before a political body such as this and take a public stand.

I respect and take wholeheartedly what you said. You're a very strong individual, Deputy Commissioner, for having done that. Whether or not we agree with the process is, in my view, totally irrelevant. You are a man of honour and should be respected, and every single Canadian who's watching this should feel that our RCMP, that institution, is in good hands.

I guess my fear was that your appearance here today would somehow descend into some acrimonious, accusatorial abyss where everything is the government's fault. I think every single Canadian, everybody in this room, wants only the best for our police force, because if we don't have and maintain the respect for our police forces then the whole system of justice.... We sit on the justice committee; the police force is where the rubber meets the road.

When Commissioner Elliott was first appointed to his position as commissioner I can recall his appearing before this committee. I made the statement then, and I still stand by it, that in the OPP one of the commissioners we had was appointed from the civil service. His name was Eric Silk, Commissioner Eric Silk, and quite frankly, even young officers like myself knew, even though he was on his way out, that he was looked on as modernizing the OPP, bringing in new concepts, new ideas, new ways of doing things.

I guess as my first question to you, Mr. Souccar, I know you were asked this question and you said the next commissioner should come from within the ranks, as happened in the OPP. And I could make some comments on that, but I shall not. Do you see, at any juncture in the RCMP—not necessarily the next commissioner—where the commissioner could come from a civilian background because of his or her abilities as a leader, his or her ability as a good administrator, and as a person who might bring in some new concepts and think outside of the box? Can you give your comments there?

• (0955)

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** In my opening comments I said that there does not appear to be a debate any longer as to whether the next commissioner should be a police officer or not. Bill Elliott himself—as recently as in this morning's paper, I believe—said that the next one should absolutely be a police officer.

As I also said earlier, when Bill Elliott was appointed as commissioner of the RCMP in 2007, although it was a bit of a shock to the system initially, everybody settled into it very quickly. I can tell you here in all frankness that everyone I worked with, everybody who reported to me, and everyone who I spoke with became very comfortable very quickly. In fact, we felt at the time, with all the changes that were about to come, that this was probably the best thing that could happen to us, because we'd have somebody who understands the bureaucracy, somebody who understands how government works—better than police officers do—and it would be very helpful to us; this change of mindset would be probably a good thing for the RCMP.

So could the next person, assuming we put that debate that I said seems to be done with...be somebody from outside? Yes, certainly, it could...as long as that person has the leadership skills and is secure enough in who they are to surround themselves with the right people, to be able to listen to advice, and to ultimately make the decision but not stifle the discussion: to allow input, listen, and be stronger by surrounding themselves with the right people. Leadership, at the end of the day, will win the day.

**Mr. Rick Norlock:** Time...?

• (1000)

**The Chair:** You have two minutes.

**Mr. Rick Norlock:** Thank you very much for that. I guess my question would follow through on that or be in a similar vein.

We're dealing with the appointment of a commissioner, and we're also dealing with the day-to-day operation of a police force—not the least of which is that it's one of the largest police forces in the world, which has such a responsibility. I don't think there is another police force in the world that has the three components. You are a municipal police force, you are a provincial police force, and you are a national police force. All the push-pull and the different levels of government you must deal with and be sensitive to, everyone from a municipal councillor in New Brunswick to a provincial premier to the Solicitor General of Canada...

I guess my question would be.... You made a statement that you believe the RCMP should become more distant from government operations. In other words, there should be an even greater arm's length between government and the police force. Can you cite an example? Because I look at the Ontario Provincial Police and it

doesn't really have a dissimilar connection to the Government of Ontario vis-à-vis the RCMP, nor does the Sûreté du Québec in its relationship with the Province of Quebec.

So I guess for the purposes of Canadians out there, why would the federal government want to see anything much different, other than perhaps the fact that Ontario has a civilian oversight? That is different from the RCMP.

Either Mr. McDonnell or Mr. Souccar...?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I can take this one.

First of all, you described the RCMP very well. We are a large and complex organization with a diverse mandate, different from any police agency that I know of in the world.

I can also tell you that we are the envy of the world. If you compare the RCMP with some of our U.S. partners—the Drug Enforcement Administration; Immigration and Customs Enforcement; Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms; Customs and Border Protection; the U.S. Coast Guard; the Federal Bureau of Investigations—all of them have common mandates, and they're continually stepping over each other. I know most of the number ones and number twos in these organizations personally, and I've been told by them that they envy us because of our mandate and our ability to move things around to accomplish our operational goals.

Having that wide mandate includes having contract policing, our uniform policing, which is an excellent training ground for police officers coming into the RCMP, learning how to do front-line police work, and eventually going to specialized areas such as drugs or national security.

Also, we have the ability to link, to connect the dots. You could have a highway patrol officer in uniform who pulls a car over on the highway near Saskatchewan and finds 50 kilos of cocaine in the trunk of the car, driven by somebody who's driving the cocaine for a major criminal organization. Very quickly, being one organization, that uniformed police officer can make one phone call, and the drug squad can be involved. Where was the cocaine going? If that person is willing to cooperate and identify the final destination of the cocaine, we can be the recipient of it and continue the investigation.

Having that wide mandate is the envy of the world.

Part of your question was about separation from government. When I talk about having a little longer arm's length and more autonomy, more nimbleness and flexibility in the RCMP, it's simply to allow us to meet our operational objectives quicker.

One example I can give you is the expenditures. This is an area I've been responsible for in federal policing, covert expenditures and expenditures for the purchase of evidence, for the payment to human sources. If you exceed a certain level, you need approval from Treasury Board. This has to go through several levels—the Minister of Public Safety, the President of the Treasury Board, and so on—for approval to be given. The amounts are low. They're old-level amounts. I've been pushing to change them for three or four years now, and still nothing has happened. With today's expenditures at 20-year-old levels, we find ourselves needing to get that authority all the time. Police work can't wait for that. The urgency of investigations sometimes requires us to make those expenditures quickly. Having ministers approve an operational expenditure, a purchase of evidence, or the payment of a human source, as I have told ministers before, could potentially require them to come to the stand and testify.

The last case I testified on was only a couple of years ago. It was a Hells Angels case. The point of the defence was whether the minister knew. Was the minister involved in giving the authorizations? My answer was no, because the minister was not involved. But this was one example where a minister could have been involved by saying yes or no to the approval. If it's a rubber stamp, then why are we going there?

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Norlock. You took the full time. We'll come back on the next round to Mr. McColeman.

We'll now move back to the Liberals. Go ahead, Mr. Kania.

• (1005)

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** Sir, when I ended my questioning last time, the last thing you said was that you had spoken with Patricia Hassard about these problems. That was the first time that you had reported any of these problems to the government. Is that accurate?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** That's correct.

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** You said during your opening, before questions, “the phone call was made to me, and I answered honestly”. Were you referring to the call with Madame Morin or with Ms. Hassard?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** My conversation with Patricia Hassard, as I said, was very short, given the illness of her dad and that she had to travel out of town. She couldn't speak with me, but she told me that Marie-Lucie Morin was going to be contacting me. Again, she is the national security advisor to the Prime Minister.

Approximately an hour later that same day, I received a call from Marie-Lucie Morin, who indicated to me that retired Senior Deputy Commissioner Sweeney had had his exit interview. As she put it, he had said that there were some problems, but he didn't open up. She said that it's not like he opened up three kimonos, but clearly there are some problems. She asked me some questions, and I answered truthfully.

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** That was the first time you advised anybody outside the RCMP about any of these concerns you had.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** To the best of my recollection it was, yes.

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** What did you tell her during that phone conversation?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** Again, it wasn't a very long phone conversation. I believe that she had broken her wrist and was on her way to the hospital. I was at brunch. I had left my wife inside the restaurant. I was on the sidewalk speaking on the phone. She said to me that we'd have to speak again, that I should speak with Bill Elliott, and that she would be speaking with him. And the conversation ended. I told her that the situation was getting to a point where it was starting to boil over.

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** Do you have any documentation, signed letters—Mr. McDonell, as well—in terms of these complaints? I know that there's a July 2010 letter. Do you have any documentation, internal or external, that was prepared that documented them?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I do not.

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** Did you send a letter to Ms. Morin or anybody else?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** No, I did not.

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** When you had this conversation that one time, she indicated that she would get back to you. Is that correct?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** That's correct.

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** That was the July 2010 conversation.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** That's correct.

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** Did either of you then, afterwards, discuss this with anybody else in the government?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** She called me back, if my memory serves me well, and told me that the matter had been turned over to Deputy Minister Bill Baker, the Deputy Minister of Public Safety, and that since the RCMP falls under Public Safety, she had moved the matter over to him.

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** When did she tell you that?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** That would have been very soon, a day or two, after my initial conversation with her. I probably have notes on it somewhere. It was, again, very shortly afterwards that I met with Bill Baker.

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** So at the beginning of August or so of 2010, you met with Mr. Baker.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** Oh, no, all of that would have been in July.

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** That's fine.

When you met with Mr. Baker, what did you tell him?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** Again, I simply relayed the situation as I laid it out in my opening comments.

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** That was July 2010.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** It was in July of 2010, at which point he seemed to be, as I would describe him, shocked by what I said to him. He asked me if this was something that happens once every six months or once a year. I told him that it happens very frequently, sometimes daily.

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** My time is running out. I have 30 seconds.

After that meeting with Mr. Baker, did you have further meetings or additional phone calls with him or with anybody else from the government, or was that it?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** After that he asked me if there was anyone else who had witnessed this. I said yes. He said that he wanted to speak to them. I believe that seven or eight assistant commissioners went down and met with Bill Baker separately. I wasn't there.

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** Was it all around the same time?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** It was all at the same time. They were in a meeting room, I believe. I was not there. They all relayed their own experiences.

**Mr. Andrew Kania:** Is there any reason it took over half a year for anything to really happen after that initial July 2010 incident report?

• (1010)

**The Chair:** Be very quick.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I really don't know why it would have taken that long.

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

We'll now move to Madame Mourani.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** Thank you.

I want to begin, Mr. Chair, by asking that Mr. McDonell's letter be submitted to the committee. There is also a report by Mr. Sweeney, I believe. I ask that it, too, be submitted to the committee.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I am not sure which report by Mr. Sweeney you mean.

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** I read in Mr. McDonell's letter that Mr. Sweeney had done an assessment. Is that assessment contained in a report?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** All I said, Ms. Mourani, was that Bill Sweeney had an exit interview with the Privy Council Office before he retired.

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** Mr. McDonell, did Mr. Sweeney not prepare a report on the management of the RCMP?

[*English*]

**Insp Mike McDonell:** I think you're referring to the report with respect to regionalization?

That's a question on my part.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** I must admit I read it in your letter. You mentioned an assessment study that Mr. Sweeney had reportedly done without any further discussion or decisions.

[*English*]

**Insp Mike McDonell:** That's the regionalization report, yes.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** Was that submitted?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I do not think a report was done. The consultant hired to study the matter presented options to Bill Sweeney, and many discussions took place between the two of them. To my mind, it made sense to have Bill Sweeney participate in those discussions before he retired. Unfortunately—

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** There was no report, nothing was done.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I know that various options were prepared based on the possible regionalization activities that the RCMP could implement.

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** Could you provide those options to the committee?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I do not have them, but—

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** Could they be submitted to the committee, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Ms. Maria Mourani:** Terrific.

I will continue, since I am short on time. As soon as the news broke, I began receiving information and emails from people—they shall remain nameless—in other departments. They told me this was not the first time that complaints had been made about Mr. Elliott's behaviour. It happened when he was at Transport Canada, and Fisheries and Oceans. That is the information I received.

I am sure that when the government appointed this man, it had all that information, as well.

Do you consider it a sign of poor judgment to appoint someone who has already had interpersonal problems in other departments, with a history of this kind of thing?

[*English*]

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** Certainly doing this knowingly is a major issue, but I can't say that Bill Elliott was appointed to the position of Commissioner of the RCMP with any knowledge on the part of the government of any historical behavioural issues. Whether or not these behavioural issues existed, I don't have any first-hand knowledge. I've heard things, again, but I have not been witness to any of his behavioural issues outside the RCMP, and I have no knowledge of the government having knowledge of that either.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** I would hope it had knowledge of that. In order to appoint someone to a position, the government must be familiar with the person's entire professional history, including their conduct in other departments. This was not the first time these issues came up, according to the information I received.

Furthermore, when you say complaints, do you mean actual grievances? Were any grievances filed against Mr. Elliott at the RCMP? Or were they verbal complaints, as opposed to formal grievances?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** As I mentioned earlier, Ms. Mourani, I am not aware of any written complaints. It is possible, but I am not sure.



**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** I am asking you because I requested that information from the RCMP, and I was told there was nothing. They did not find any information on whether or not any grievances had been filed. I hope that is true and that nothing is being hidden. Just for your information, Supt. Yves Marineau, the departmental privacy coordinator, responded to my request. I would have liked to know if any grievances had been filed. I would also like the committee to have that information, as well, if possible.

• (1015)

[English]

**The Chair:** There are a couple of mentions that Madame Mourani has had in regard to a letter being tabled and to other information. When you leave here, if you think of some of those and if you can add information, please do that and feel free to send it to the clerk of the committee. We would appreciate it.

Mr. Souccar.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I just want to make sure that there was no undertaking on my behalf—or if there was, if you could let me know, please, Mr. Chair—on the options with respect to regionalizations. I don't have these options in my possession. I don't have an office at the RCMP right now, so if this is an undertaking, perhaps a direct request can be made by Ms. Mourani to the RCMP.

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

We'll move to Mr. Davies, please.

**Mr. Don Davies:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The government side has indicated on more than one occasion that they think there should be a strong prohibition against political direction of the RCMP. Yet we know that the original appointment of Commissioner Elliott was an appointment that, in many people's eyes, had political overtones to it, given Mr. Elliott's history.

Do you think there should be an independent selection process of the next Commissioner of the RCMP, and if so, do you have any ideas in that regard?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** The RCMP Act has the Minister of Public Safety overseeing the Commissioner of the RCMP. The Commissioner of the RCMP responds to the Minister of Public Safety under the umbrella of public safety along with the Canada Border Services Agency, Correctional Services, and CSIS.

In terms of the selection process and whether it should be independent, I hope and I expect that when a selection board is put together the individuals on the selection board are looking for the most meritorious candidate—the candidate with the leadership necessary to lead a very complex organization—and not looking at whether or not that individual is going to be a lap dog, if you will, for anyone, and that they will be doing what is required to look after the best interests of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and serve the public in an open, transparent, and accountable way.

**Mr. Don Davies:** Thank you.

I want to move to something different. You've talked a lot about the morale of the RCMP. I think the next leader is going to face that challenge to try to determine what the causes of that low morale are, and hopefully take positive steps that will improve it.

In the summer of 2008 the Conservatives promised that they would implement raises—I can't remember the exact number, but in the 4% to 5% range—to address attraction and retention issues in the force. After the election in October 2008 the government reneged on that promise, and since that time the commissioner has either been unwilling or unable to address that successfully.

I'm wondering if you could tell us what effect not honouring that promise to the men and women in the force had on morale.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** Well, we have.... And Mike perhaps can refresh.... I'll need some help on this one, but we have instituted service day, so that's been put in place, and I believe that has gone a long way in retention issues. We've instituted cadet day, which helped us with our recruiting. We've instituted a backup policy that compensates members for being on call.

So I think there are a number of compensation-related matters that have been taken care of that I think have gone some distance in helping with retention.

• (1020)

**Mr. Don Davies:** Is it still an outstanding issue, are you saying? Or are you saying there are no issues with compensation rates in the RCMP?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** Can you help me with this one?

**Insp Mike McDonell:** At the time I was a commanding officer I was responsible for operations in Ontario, and initially when it comes out I think any time you touch a person's purse strings they get a little sensitive. And there was talk among the membership when I met with them.

I go back to Sir Robert Peel's basic principles of policing. One of them is that the police are the people and the people are the police.

At the time our headquarters were in the city of London, and people were being laid off left, right, and centre and losing their jobs in the industries there. Some industries were shutting down. Specifically, on the day of the announcement, 3M was closing its aerosol plant there.

So I met with the people and said, along that principle, to just stop and think for a second about the number of Canadians who were losing their jobs in this recession and difficult time. So before you get feeling like you're being bled out, just think about the situation in this specific town. And I did the same when I went to Toronto. It was time to think about who we were.

**Mr. Don Davies:** I take it, then, that what you're saying, if I can sum it up, is that it's not really a current issue.

**Insp Mike McDonell:** No, it isn't.

**Mr. Don Davies:** It won't be one of the major challenges being faced.

**Insp Mike McDonell:** No.

**Mr. Don Davies:** What are the next challenges?

**The Chair:** Mr. Davies, you have five seconds.

**Mr. Don Davies:** Thanks.

What are the major challenges that the next commissioner will have to deal with, in your view, in order to get the force's morale back up to a position we all want it in?

**The Chair:** Our time is up, so just summarize very quickly, if you can.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I think the major challenges are the ones that I set out in my opening comments: a potential board of management; some autonomy for the RCMP to be able to perform its complex policing duties in a more nimble, more flexible way; the ability to deal with problem employees, grievances, discipline matters, so dealing with the RCMP Act; and oversight, transparency, and accountability to the public, which I think will be first and foremost in terms of gaining the public's confidence and being able to admit when an error was made, explaining how it will be dealt with, and showing results at the end of the day.

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

Mr. McColeman.

**Mr. Phil McColeman (Brant, CPC):** Thank you.

Thank you to both of you for being here.

First, to Deputy Commissioner Souccar, have you had any communication with any of the committee members around the table here prior to this meeting—direct communications, yourself?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** No.

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** No? Okay.

And Commander, yourself, any direct communications?

**Insp Mike McDonell:** No.

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** Okay.

Secondly, is it correct that Public Safety Canada hired a Mr. Reid Morden to conduct a workplace assessment of the senior management? If so, what was the timing of that?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** First of all, that is correct; they hired Reid Morden to complete a workplace assessment. That would have started in early August. I can probably get you the exact date, if you wish, but it started early August.

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** Okay. So there was some action taken after the identification of management problems, some action taken to get a private contract in place with a consultant.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** There was action taken after the matter hit the media.

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** Okay.

I just wonder how you feel about some of the changes that we know were made within the ranks under Commissioner Elliott's watch. First of all, there was the increase—the significant increase, I believe a 16% increase—to the personnel of the RCMP. That would be one of the changes implemented, I believe. There were also the enhancements and expanded capacities of Depot, and also the pay for new recruits while they're at Depot.

How significant are those changes that were brought into effect?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** Those were changes that were on their way to being implemented quite some time prior to the arrival of our then new commissioner in 2007. They were then put into place after his arrival, but the process had started prior to his arrival.

The changes are very significant, absolutely significant. The payment of cadets I think went some way in attracting more people to the RCMP. When I joined, the day I went to Depot, I was a member of the RCMP on full salary. Then there was a period of time when the RCMP felt that “We don't need to pay anyone. They will come.” But in fact it caused significant hardship to individuals who had families and mortgages and so on.

So yes, it went a long way in increasing the recruiting levels. In terms of the additional personnel who came in, absolutely that goes a long way in helping us, especially with expanded mandates such as the Shiprider and a lot of the border initiatives that require additional personnel.

So it goes a long way in helping. It goes a long way in freeing up police officers. Certainly it then helps with morale.

•(1025)

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** Okay. So the resources that have been provided over the last couple of years while under our government's watch have been significant.

I have a last question. In your opening comments you talked about an oversight board. I just want you to clarify this for me, because I know we've talked about a civilian oversight board—that's what Bill C-38 on the order paper is about—and you've talked about a board of management. Is that the same as a civilian oversight board? I believe there was a distinction made between the two in your opening remarks, and I'd like to understand what that distinction is.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** The board of management certainly is separate and distinct from a civilian oversight. And it could probably be explained much better by others whose business it is to deal with these matters. My responsibilities, as I said, were federal policing, federal international policing.

A board of management, as I understand it, to the best of my knowledge, would act as a conduit, as a interlocutory, if you will, between the RCMP and government. It would play a challenge function to the commissioner on non-operational matters. I'm not suggesting for a second that a board of management should poke its nose into operational matters, but non-operational administrative matters, and certainly be an arm's-length body to act between the RCMP and government.

Mike can probably explain the special investigative units, the SIU, in Ontario, which is a model that works very well. That body would then look into complaints and serious incidents involving RCMP members, have the power to subpoena individuals, have the power to see documents, have the power to give a level of confidence and comfort to the public that the RCMP is not closed and investigating its own and letting out what it wants to let out.

So it's an outside agency that can provide greater transparency and accountability to the RCMP.

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

Now we'll move back to the Liberals. Five minutes, Mr. Holland.

**Mr. Mark Holland:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Let me continue on that point, if I could, but before I do I'd also like to commend you both on your appearance today and your candour in coming forward. I think in the carrying out of your duties there comes a point sometimes when you recognize the only way things are going to change is if you speak out, when it's not possible in the interior. And I think you've described a situation, both of you, where that occurred, where you simply got to a point where you realized the only way change would be possible was if you spoke out, and you did so appropriately to government officials.

The problem I have is with that system, and it's a bit of what you're describing. If people such as you didn't come forward, I personally don't believe we would have seen any change, but because you came forward, we saw change. But it shouldn't be that way, and I'm wondering if the system that you described, having a board of management in place, would have provided the outlet that you needed to get redress. In other words, when you were getting that frustration of not being able to solve this and eventually having to turn, effectively, to the body politic to say that this has to be fixed, that it's toxic and things have gotten out of control, how do we get it so that you can fix that internally without having to go externally?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I believe, Mr. Holland, that this matter could have been dealt with more swiftly and in a much cleaner way had there been a board of management in place. It would have avoided the question that was asked earlier about complaining to government. That's where that board of management would be a conduit, a body between government and the RCMP, and again, this would be perhaps an administrative matter the board of management could then be involved with.

• (1030)

**Mr. Mark Holland:** First of all, it must have been very frustrating that this wasn't in place. How frustrating is it, then, for you and others when things finally get to that point where you feel you have no other recourse, and then you go, as you say you did in July, and have these conversations with the national security advisor for the Prime Minister, and with others, and then nothing happens?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** Well, I don't know what was happening behind the scenes. Certainly there could have been a lot happening. Maybe there was; maybe there wasn't. Certainly the matter hit the media.

**Mr. Mark Holland:** But did you see a change after that? Were August, September, October, and November looking different from the months that preceded that?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** No. In fact it got worse once it got into the media, only because tension grew. Tension grew; camps got created. So that was probably, as I said from day one, the worst thing that could happen to us, if this thing hit the media. It needed to be dealt with quickly, swiftly, and my preference all along was to deal with it behind closed doors, face to face, like any work conflict that happens from time to time, and resolve it in that way. There was no intention of having this become a public show.

**Mr. Mark Holland:** I think you made that very clear.

I'm wondering now. You have the title of deputy commissioner, but you said you don't have an office there. Is it your feeling that you have been punished for coming forward and for speaking out?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I was removed from my position, as everyone knows, because that was made public on November 4, I believe. Since then, we have.... I'm going to read you this: I am currently on annual leave, and issues relating to my appointment with the RCMP have been resolved to the mutual satisfaction of the parties.

The agreement is confidential, so I leave it that. If there are any probing questions, I'll ask for the opportunity to seek legal counsel.

**Mr. Mark Holland:** Okay. That's fair.

You mentioned your conversations with the deputy commissioner. He asked you about frequency, and you were in the process of answering how frequent the type of situation was that you were dealing with. Do you want to just finish your answer there? How frequent was what you were dealing with? He asked you if it was every six months or every three months, and you started to give a response. I'm just wondering if you could finish that response.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** My response was that sometimes it was on a daily basis. Sometimes it was on a weekly basis, but it was very regular. It wasn't an unusual situation; it was becoming a very usual situation. That's when he asked me if others had observed it and said he would want to speak to others. I told him to tell me how many and at what rank, and they would be there, because I'd had enough complaints.

**Mr. Mark Holland:** Just to both of you, would you say that those concerns were pervasive—in other words, you were hearing that throughout senior management?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I think it was pervasive with respect to the individuals who had dealings with him.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We're going to go back to the government side and then to Ms. Mourani, but I would just like to ask one question, and it comes from what we've heard from the opposition parties.

Mr. Souccar, you said that your initial phone call was in July 2010. Is that correct?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** It was very early July 2010.

**The Chair:** All right. The question that the government wasn't acting... But on July 30, 2010, the Minister of Public Safety announced that Reid Morden—so it wasn't August, it was still in July—the former director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, would head up the RCMP workplace assessment. Would you say that is a timely response?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I think the matter hit the media. My first phone call would have been on July 2 or 3, I would say. The matter hit the media on July 29, and shortly after it hit the media, that's when the workplace assessment was announced.

You said July 30. That's probably right.

**The Chair:** The individual who headed it up was named, so the planning must have been in place to make that announcement on the 29th or the 30th.

Mr. Lobb, I'm taking some of your time there. I apologize. Go ahead.

**Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC):** It's okay.

First of all, I'd like to thank both of you gentlemen for your years of service. I guess cumulatively they have almost reached 70 years. Certainly it's a service to the country. I think, Mr. Souccar, this is a family trade, apparently, with your son and your wife also involved with the RCMP.

Over the last three or three and a half years of which both of you gentlemen were senior managers within the RCMP, can you tell Canadians what you believe to be some of the successes you've had? You both have mentioned that you want to move forward and move on. Maybe you can tell Canadians what you feel are some of the successes the RCMP has had in the last couple of years.

•(1035)

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** There certainly have been a lot of successes over the last number of years. The area for which I was responsible is easy for me to speak about. I only speak about it because I'm most familiar with it. We've had numerous international organized crime investigations that were successfully concluded. We've had numerous national security counter-terrorism investigations—the most recent one completed here in Ottawa. Everyone knows about the Toronto one. We had the Winter Olympics, which was at the time the largest major event the RCMP had ever taken part in, and I believe that was done very successfully. The G-8 and G-20 then became the largest security event ever to take place. Operationally, these would be the successes that come to my mind.

Mike, do you want to add any more?

**Insp Mike McDonell:** For me, as responsible for national security, it was the fact that there has not been a successful terrorist attack in Canada. I think that speaks to the integrity and the good working relationship that the RCMP has with many other partners nationally and internationally, as well as our role in the community, getting back out to the community and more integrated with our policing partners. I can speak to Ontario, the integration that we enjoy and the partnerships that we enjoy.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** If I could, another one that is tragic—however, it was dealt with in a way that I think is commendable—was the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti, where we lost two of our members, Chief Superintendent Doug Coates and Sergeant Mark

Gallagher. We immediately mobilized teams 24 hours a day to get our people out, to get new people in, to get victim identification specialists in. There were many fundraising events that the RCMP took part in to help the Haitian community in Haiti. I've been down there myself to witness the tragedy. That's one of the advantages of the RCMP and its diverse mandate, and how wide it is, that we're able to mobilize personnel.

The Winter Olympics, the G-8, the G-20: being able to get resources from across the country from the RCMP and from our partner agencies I think was essential to the success of such events.

**The Chair:** Very quickly, Mr. Lobb.

**Mr. Ben Lobb:** I know you mentioned a couple of times, just maybe perhaps more succinctly, if there were a couple of recommendations to have moving forward for senior management to deal with issues—because they're going to come up, there are going to be issues always in management, whether it's one way or the other—what would you like to see moving forward as a couple of recommendations to help deal with these issues internally?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I think to help the organization internally, you need to ensure that there is trust in the organization externally. That comes with transparency, with accountability, and that oversight body I think would go a long way in providing confidence to the public to be able to not simply see what the RCMP says it has done but to have an arm's-length, outside body overseeing our activities in terms of complaints, in terms of misconduct, and so on, dealing with the matters.

Personally, I'm all for it. I've always been all for it. There's nothing to hide. What do you need? We'll provide it to you in order that you can do a thorough investigation. As I said, it's not very different from what the Ontario model of what the SIU is, which I believe works very well and gives that confidence to the public.

•(1040)

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

Now we'll go to Madame Mourani.

[Translation]

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

Mr. Souccar, earlier, you said that the next commissioner should not be the government's lap dog, among other things. Do you think Mr. Elliott was the government's lap dog?

[English]

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** No, I don't believe so.

[Translation]

I do not think so. That is certainly not my opinion.

[English]

I never said and I don't believe that Bill Elliott was acting on direction from the government. He certainly was aware of government, probably more so than any other commissioner that we've ever had, simply because that's his background. He comes from the bureaucracy. I think he worked as a chief of staff for Mr. Mazankowski back then. So that's his background, that's his mindset. That's not necessarily a bad thing to be aware of, but certainly you would have to be able to act independently of it in the best interests of the organization.

So to answer your question, no, I don't believe that Bill Elliott was a puppet on a string, if you will, for the government.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** What do you make of his sudden decision to step down, just a few days before this committee's meeting.

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** Normally, a commissioner's mandate spans three to five years. It is not the average. He would have been on the job four years in July. I think it will take at least six months to select another commissioner. The last time around, I believe, the selection process began in December 2006—

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** But do you not find that...?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** —and ended in July 2007. So it takes at least six months.

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** I understand that, but it is still quite the coincidence that he decided to step down a few days before this committee's meeting.

Earlier, I asked you whether there was a point of contention between you and Mr. Elliott in terms of how the RCMP was being managed. Could you briefly tell me what it was, please?

[English]

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** I think the last disagreement, the last difference of opinion we had, was over an attendance at the G-8 and the G-20.

[Translation]

He decided to visit our security site for the G8 and G20 summits the day the event got under way. My advice was this.

[English]

“That's not the time to go”. Once the conference starts, the game is on, security is on, our people are focused, and they don't need a commissioner present at the time. The presence of the commissioner is like the presence of the Chief of the Defence Staff and maybe even greater. It has a major impact on people and you have to see it to believe it. The presence of the commissioner among constables and corporals has an impact, and my advice to him was not to go,

because it would be distracting. People all of a sudden are worried about the arrival of a commissioner, saluting the commissioner, and making sure that they can brief the commissioner. I told him it's tantamount to walking through a crime scene: you don't do it; back off.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** Did he follow your advice?

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** No. And I know that Bill Sweeney told him the same thing. He advised him not to go and to listen to me. But he decided to go anyways.

[English]

This was one disagreement we had. It's not the end of the world. I can't think of any others. They don't come to mind right now, but there were disagreements, differences in views. That's not a bad thing, having differences of opinions.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** That is a very good example. I appreciate it because it helps paint a picture of someone, who, in my view, did not check on the organization's preparations for quite a large-scale event from a public safety standpoint. And we saw what a disaster Toronto turned out to be. I understand your position completely.

●(1045)

[English]

**D/Commr Raf Souccar:** But I do want to say, and this is important, that differences of opinion are not a bad thing. In fact they're a good thing, because differences of opinion put more on the table. And in the end, with more options on the table, more opinions on the table, you can be better informed, so that you can pick the best one and carry it as your decision.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** I have another quick question.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Souccar.

I'm sorry, Madame Mourani, your time is well over. Differences of opinion are not necessarily a bad thing, but our time is up and I am governed by that clock.

I want to thank the two representatives today, Mr. McDonell and Mr. Souccar, for appearing before our committee. I know that it wasn't easy for you to be here today, but we thank you for your input, your testimony, and we wish you all the best.

We are now adjourned.





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