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# **Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Wednesday, December 3, 2014**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Daryl Kramp**



## Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

Wednesday, December 3, 2014

• (1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC)):** Order, please. If the media wish to scum, they can do it after the meeting.

Welcome to meeting number 43 of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

Today, we are doing supplementary estimates (B), so I will read the order as presented.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), we have a study of the subject matter of the supplementary estimates (B) for 2014-15: votes 1b and 5b under Canada Border Services Agency; vote 1b under Canadian Security Intelligence Service; vote 1b under Correctional Service of Canada; vote 1b under Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness; votes 1b, 5b and 10b under Royal Canadian Mounted Police; and vote 1b under Royal Canadian Mounted Police External Review Committee.

Appearing today before us as witnesses, for the first hour we have the Honourable Steven Blaney, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness. Accompanying him now and for the second hour, from the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, we have François Guimont, deputy minister.

From Canada Border Services Agency, we have Luc Portelance, president; from Correctional Service of Canada, we have Don Head, commissioner; from Canadian Security Intelligence Service, we have Michel Coulombe, director; from the Parole Board of Canada, we have Harvey Cenaiko, chairperson; from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, we have Deputy Commissioner Mike Cabana, deputy commissioner of federal policing.

Welcome to all of our witnesses. Thank you very kindly for coming here today for this study. We will proceed with an opening statement, up to 10 minutes, should there be one, and after that we will go directly to questions from our members.

Minister, do you have an opening statement?

[Translation]

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness):** Yes, Mr. Chair.

First, I would like to thank the committee members who ensured that Bill C-44, which aims to protect Canada, can return to the House of Commons for third reading and, therefore, be sent later to the Senate, obtain royal assent and become law in Canada.

I am pleased to be here with you today. As you can see, I have with me—

[English]

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

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** You'll know what the point of order is, Mr. Chair. It's the third time I've made this point of order.

The minister has all the resources of the department. He speaks from written notes every time. It is just absolutely unacceptable that... It always was the practice that ministers brought their written statements with them. We've gotten away from that.

The minister's written statement should be before us, so we can go through it as he goes through it, so we hear the exact words he's saying. I'm just issuing a complaint again that this minister comes before this committee with all the department and all the resources he has with him and is not prepared to give us a brief.

We have witnesses, Mr. Chair, from volunteer organizations. We expect them to have a written brief, in both official languages, so I see no reason why a minister does not.

• (1535)

**The Chair:** I recognize your point, Mr. Easter, you've raised it before.

Mr. Blaney.

[Translation]

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The hon. member is in the habit of raising this point. As you can see, I am currently speaking without my notes. So it would be difficult to provide them in both official languages, but I do intend to continue making a presentation.

Today, we are here to discuss supplementary estimates (B).

I may consult my notes, but I will let you make your decision on that.

[English]

**The Chair:** Ms. Ablonczy.

**Hon. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I would just comment that my friend, Mr. Easter, has been here for some time, but not as long as I have been here. I sat where he sat for many years—13 to be exact—and had many Liberal ministers appear, and I can tell you that very often, if not most often, I never saw a written document of their remarks.

Mr. Easter, getting on your high horse is a little bit out of line.

**The Chair:** Let's stop the dialogue now. I do appreciate the comments from both sides.

We have a number of very experienced and relative witnesses, so we will go directly to Minister Blaney for his statement.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I'm sorry for this unintentional loss of time.

I am always impressed when I appear before the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, especially when I am surrounded by officials from agencies responsible for the protection and security of Canadians.

I am accompanied today by Harvey Cenaiko, from the Parole Board of Canada; Michel Coulombe, from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service; Mike Cabana, from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police; Don Head, from the Correctional Service of Canada; Luc Portelance, from the Canada Border Services Agency; and François Guimont, who is the Deputy Minister of Public Safety Canada.

I would like to tell the members of the committee that these people work very hard, particularly when we were called to respond to the recent terrorist attack. We were in the House a few minutes ago, and I had the chance to meet the person who administered first aid to Warrant Officer Nathan Cirillo at the National War Memorial. We are currently preparing a proper and balanced response to this growing terrorist threat. Obviously, we are not going to overreact, but we are not going to stand idly by in the face of this threat, either.

Furthermore, I would like to publicly thank the heads of the agencies that help us to adapt. They have already taken concrete action to protect Canadians.

We are here today to make budgetary adjustments that will allow these important individuals to continue to ensure our protection. As you know, our department was created in response to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Even now, I note that the priority for national security is fighting terrorism.

That said, we must not in any way neglect the other important aspects of public safety, which is why I am here this afternoon.

As you know, we have implemented many initiatives to move forward our government's ambitious public safety program. This involves cracking down on crime, improving the rights of victims and strengthening our national security. For example, I recently announced the coming into force of the Safer Witnesses Act, which will increase the effectiveness of the federal government's witness protection program for the individuals it protects, while meeting the needs of law enforcement agencies.

Furthermore, we just sent Bill C-32, An Act to enact the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights and to amend certain Acts, back to the House for debate at report stage. This fundamental bill will change the way we handle justice in Canada and will put victims at the heart of our justice system.

● (1540)

[*English*]

I also want to thank the committee for its work on division 17 of Bill C-43, which amends the DNA Identification Act to create Lindsey's law. This important measure will create a DNA-based missing persons index to help provide closure to the families of missing persons.

I understand that Judy Peterson made a very emotional presentation to the committee. I would like to thank you all for your support on this important legislation that she has advocated for on behalf of her daughter.

[*Translation*]

Many of you may remember that November 16 was the sad anniversary of the disappearance of Julie Surprenant, in Terrebonne. Her sister, Andréanne, wanted to pay tribute to her on that occasion. It was a moving experience. It allowed us to remind the victims and loved ones of the families of missing or murdered individuals of the implementation of this act, which will help them to get through this type of situation and to find some comfort.

[*English*]

On other fronts, I have introduced measures to provide a simple and safe firearms licensing regime with Bill C-42, the common sense firearms licensing act. This bill was thoroughly debated one week ago. I look forward to this bill being referred to this committee for study in the very near future.

Just last week, I appeared before you regarding Bill C-44, the protection of Canada from terrorists act. I know the committee has completed its study, and has returned the bill to the House without amendments. As I said earlier, recent terrorist attacks are a reminder that the terrorist organization ISIL is a very real threat to Canadians. It is the reason we are working very determinedly to strengthen the tools available to the police and intelligence community in the areas of surveillance, detention, and arrest. The protection of Canada from terrorists act is just the first step in our efforts to do that.

[*Translation*]

My department and its agencies continue to give priority to efforts to fight terrorism and violent extremism, which includes working with our international allies.

Mr. Chair, I could speak more about the measures that we are implementing, but I would now like to move on to the Supplementary Estimates (B), 2014-15. Essentially, these are adjustments to the budget envelope that we were allocated and some modifications that need to be made to properly reflect the actual accounting and current expenses.

[*English*]

These estimates demonstrate our ongoing commitment to keeping Canadians safe from those who wish to harm them without creating billion-dollar boondoggles.

Allow me to provide some highlights of what I mean.

[Translation]

As the committee members can see, the Supplementary Estimates (B), 2014-15, aim to transfer \$3.3 million from the Canada Border Services Agency to the RCMP to build a joint use firing range in British Columbia. It also aims to obtain a transfer of \$5.2 million from the Correctional Service of Canada to the RCMP to support the renovations of C block at the RCMP training academy for correctional officer training.

These are prime examples of how we are using taxpayers' money. This way of operating is more effective. We are achieving this by grouping resources, while creating stronger ties within the department.

[English]

In addition, the estimates seek \$5.2 million for CSIS in support of national security initiatives. I would also like to highlight two key items related to the RCMP. First, on November 28—as of Monday—the Enhancing Royal Canadian Mounted Police Accountability Act came into force, bringing in a new era of modernization and accountability for the RCMP. In order to implement that act, these supplementary estimates provide for \$7.9 million to the RCMP to implement new processes relating to grievances and public complaints.

Additionally, there is \$710,000 to the RCMP External Review Committee to maintain the committee's existing operations. This entails the review of certain grievances and appeals of decisions and disciplinary and other labour relations matters involving members of the force. This is a very important accomplishment, Mr. Chair. We've been working on that for years. In less than two years, the RCMP has been able to implement this major shift. The deputy commissioner can expand on this later on, but this is certainly a great accomplishment. As you know, we now have beefed up—if you allow me this expression—the oversight of the RCMP.

Second, the estimates seek to transfer \$41.9 million to the RCMP for policing services provided pursuant to the first nations policing program. This funding will further support policing services that are professional, dedicated, and responsive to the first nation and Inuit communities they serve.

• (1545)

[Translation]

In addition, \$3.7 million is set aside for the national public safety campaign for the next phase in the fight against bullying, called “Get Cyber Safe”. I must tell you that we have had very interesting results in terms of market penetration and our ability to reach out to young people.

We are very proud of the success of this campaign, which is having a significant impact across the country. More than a million people have visited the “Get Cyber Safe” website, and there have been different initiatives in that respect. Of course, I encourage committee members to pass on these constructive messages on the importance of having healthy practices when visiting social media sites and using information technology or any electronic device.

[English]

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, it is clear that our Conservative government is taking strong action to keep Canadians safe. We are ensuring that victims are at the heart of the justice system and ensuring that child sexual predators face serious consequences. We are making our firearms laws safe and sensible, and we are making sure that our law enforcement and national security organizations have the tools they need to do their jobs.

The one threat that seems to run through all of these initiatives is that they have been delayed, obstructed, or sometimes opposed outright. But we are prevailing, Mr. Chair, and I am proud to say that we intend to stay the course. We have the protection of Canada act coming back into the House of Commons, and we intend to come in the near future with additional legislation so that we can tackle this evolving terrorist threat.

With that in mind, Mr. Chair, I would be more than happy to respond to questions from the members of this important committee.

Merci.

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

We will now go to our first round of questioning.

We will start with Mr. Carmichael, for seven minutes, please.

**Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Minister Blaney and your colleagues, for joining us today as witnesses.

Minister Blaney, out of respect, we have received some disturbing news today. I wonder if you could perhaps give the committee a bit of an update on the reported shooting of an RCMP constable in Kamloops.

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** I thank the member for the question.

I was informed this morning that a front-line police officer from the RCMP in British Columbia was wounded. This happened while two RCMP members were performing a vehicle stop in Kamloops, British Columbia, at 2:45 this morning as part of an ongoing operation investigating organized crime. One member was shot. The RCMP members returned fire, but the suspect fled the scene and was later apprehended.

I just got confirmation from Mike Cabana that he's undergoing surgery, but at this point in time his condition is stable and we certainly hope

[Translation]

...that he will recover from his injuries as quickly as possible.

[English]

Maybe I can turn to Mike Cabana.

•(1550)

**Deputy Commissioner Mike Cabana (Deputy Commissioner, Federal Policing, Royal Canadian Mounted Police):** Thank you, Minister. Actually, I don't have much, because I've been tied up in meetings. The last information I was provided was that he was seriously wounded and was undergoing surgery, but his life was not in danger.

**Mr. John Carmichael:** As one committee member I certainly don't want to overstep my bounds here, but our thoughts and prayers are certainly with him and his family for his full recovery.

They should know he's in our thoughts.

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** I think it reminds us of the dangers to our front-line officers, and it certainly reminds us that they have to remain prudent. To this point in time I have heard that he was seriously wounded, that he's undergoing surgery, and that his family is close to him. So we certainly are sending them our best wishes.

**Mr. John Carmichael:** Thank you. I appreciate the update.

Minister, as you know, most of the members at this table today were either in this room or across the hall while a terrorist shot and killed an unarmed soldier, Corporal Cirillo, and stormed the building with an illegally acquired firearm. I wonder if you could comment on the state of security on the Hill at this time, the changes following those tragic events of October 22, and whether there will be more changes coming.

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** Thank you for your question.

As you know, the security of Parliament is under the supervision of the Speaker of the House and the Speaker of the Senate. I was pleased to learn that they recently decided to merge their two services.

Wherever we are moving forward in terms of security there are three guiding principles that have to guide us and, I would suggest, to guide the Speakers in their moving forward and our willingness to fully support them. As you know, for the security of the precinct, this role is played by the RCMP. It is important that we have a unified command, so that whenever something happens there is a flow of information. This is the very first important principle, that we have a unified command.

The second important aspect of this strategy is that we have a leadership that is fully aware of the full capability and the capacity of security. This is why there has been a very productive discussion with the Speaker. We already have seen a major improvement on the Hill.

At this point in time I must stress that the threat that was considered was mostly a car and vehicle threat. Now we need to consider that pedestrians could also be considered as a potential threat. That's why there has already been an improvement and an adjustment to the security.

So a unified command and interoperability among the different forces.... It does not really matter what colour the uniform is. What matters is that these individuals are all working together under the same direction and applying the safety rules and securing the access to this very important place. This is the House of the people. We understand that and this certainly has to be considered, but also in

the meantime people have to be protected, whether it's people inside or outside Parliament. This is how we are moving forward.

I must tell you, as you can tell there have been major improvements and we will support the two Speakers in their willingness to move forward and increase the security of the Hill, both for visitors and those who work here and for parliamentarians as well, who obviously have a privileged access to this place.

**Mr. John Carmichael:** Thank you, Minister.

I know your comments are important to Canadians who are watching today from coast to coast to coast. That information is very relevant and very important to them.

Minister, I would like to speak with you briefly about the supplementary estimates (B), and on the Correctional Service of Canada specifically. As our government moved to creating safer streets and communities and we talked about keeping victims safe, there was tremendous noise and comment from our opposition that putting criminals in jail would create a prison system that would be bursting at the seams.

I wonder if you could comment on the supplementary estimates (B). As I look at the information that I have before me, it looks like the Correctional Service of Canada is certainly containing their spending, which would indicate that in fact we're not seeing that happening in our prison system, the prisons bursting at the seams, but rather that the prison population may, and I look for your direction on this, be remaining steady. I wonder if you could comment on that, sir.

•(1555)

**The Chair:** Just briefly, please....

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** Very briefly, the population of inmates is decreasing or is very stable. Commissioner Head can comment on that, but in terms of the apocalyptic projections that were made that our tough-on-crime policies would have an impact, in fact they are actually having an impact. It is that we are keeping criminals behind bars and we have stopped the revolving doors that made criminals repeat crimes outside. We are keeping them behind bars.

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

Thank you, Mr. Carmichael.

Now, Mr. Garrison, you have seven minutes, please.

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the minister and the officials for being here today.

The minister said several times both in public statements and statements in the House that the budget for Public Safety is larger than it was in 2006, but in fact we know that in the 2012 budget the minister planned cuts of about 10% or \$688 million from Public Safety. We also see the public accounts for 2013-14 show that his department and its various agencies lapsed \$572 million in spending. So that appears to mean that we're about somewhere around 18% or 19% below the spending in 2012.

I wonder how the minister squares a 19% reduction with his statement today that he has to make sure that Public Safety has the tools they need to do their jobs, because surely that includes the resources they need.

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** I thank you for your very interesting question, and I must tell you that I am very proud to be part of a government that takes very seriously the money that comes from taxpayers.

I must tell you that under the leadership of my predecessors we were absolutely able to accomplish an increase in providing more services to Canadians while indeed cutting red tape. That's exactly what took place in this department. Let me give you the example of the Canada Border Services Agency, which has seen the number of front-line officers increase by 26%. Have we shaved our budgets so we're cutting red tape and bureaucratic procedures? Absolutely. Have we increased our people on the street, ensuring that our streets are safer? Absolutely.

We're very proud to have done this. I'm very proud of the way we have handled the public funds. This is why we can say today that we have increased our budget for the RCMP by one third and we have increased the budget of CSIS, which is our security and intelligence, by one third, while in the meantime increasing service to the population.

I think Canadians are very proud now that they can benefit from those savings, and that families will have more money in their pockets, while in the meantime we are increasing the safety of the country.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Mr. Minister, to look specifically at CSIS, which you've raised, your plan was to cut \$24.5 million, and your government lapsed another \$18.2 million, so what we have here is about \$43 million in reductions since 2012. In these supplementary estimates you tell me that you're asking for \$5.2 million more for CSIS for national security measures, so it seems to me that you must have gone too far if you have to come back and ask for \$5.2 million more.

I wonder if that's the result of the kind of thing we saw in testimony before the Senate Standing Committee on National Security and Defence on October 20, when the CSIS deputy director of operations, in speaking about those who've returned from abroad and may have been radicalized and trying to investigate them, said several things. One thing he said was, "We can't devote all our resources to all of them all the time." He went on to talk about the "limited resources" for monitoring those people.

Again, how does the minister square this \$43 million in reduced spending since 2012 with coming here today to ask for another \$5.2 million, when his officials have publicly said they didn't have enough to monitor all those who've returned from abroad?

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** Once again, I thank you for your question.

I would be really happy to see the NDP supporting more investment in increasing our national security measures. I must tell you that I would have really appreciated it if you could have supported providing more tools by supporting Bill C-44. I think we had an open debate in the House of Commons. I came here and brought very reasonable arguments. You had many witnesses. I

would have liked the NDP to support Bill C-44, because I believe this is what this country needs to keep Canadians safe. This is about the tools, and when it comes time to speak about money, it is also time for the budget.

But let me tell you why I'm here today for CSIS and what is, if I can use the expression, their cashflow. In supplementary estimates (B), the net amount for CSIS is \$5.2 million or 1% of authorities to date. CSIS has received from the Treasury Board authority to increase its voted appropriation by \$5.3 million as follows: an increase of \$3.6 million to recover proceeds from the sale of homes purchased under the home sale plan and of \$1.2 million for parking fees, and \$559,000 to recover costs related to the security screening of employees.

This is the increased authority. There's been a decrease from DFATD and DND. Actually, it's money that was transferred from CSIS to DFATD, DND, or the RCMP. These amounts range from \$220,000 to \$1.6 million. They are to provide support to the department staff allocated at missions abroad; an amount for the integrated terrorism assessment centre and for the Canadian safety and security program; and there's also a transfer from the RCMP for "software tools".

What I'm asking for today is that the committee allow these funding transfers so that we can reflect the real expenses incurred. I certainly am looking forward to coming back to this committee to seek support for additional funding to increase our safety and for the evolving threat of terrorism.

• (1600)

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Okay, thank you very much.

Mr. Minister, with respect, I want to go back to my point that you've cut resources for CSIS since 2012 by very significant amounts, which seems to have put you in the position of having to come back and ask for more money. It would seem to me that any reasonable person looking at this would say that you went too far in your cutting resources to CSIS. I guess that's what I see in the message of your being back here today, if you're asking for another \$5.2 million.

Now, I'm not saying that I'm opposed to that. I'm saying that I think you went too far and you probably do need to add money back in that budget. If you listened to the testimony of your deputy director in the Senate, where he said he didn't have sufficient resources to monitor people who were a threat, then obviously you've gone too far in reducing the resources.

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** As I told you, we've increased the budget for CSIS by one third over the course of our mandate. The amount we're talking about today is transferring funds. I indeed expect to face, to adapt to the evolving threat, and to come back for additional funding. I'm looking forward to having your support.

However, today is for the current ongoing operation of CSIS.

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

Now, Mr. Falk, please. You have seven minutes as well in this first round.

**Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to start off by expressing my gratitude to all of you who represent our different security agencies here in Canada: correctional service, border services, the Department of Public Safety, CSIS, RCMP, and police services. Thank you for the most important work that you do in providing safety and security for Canadian citizens.

Minister, you've already mentioned it in some of your comments here, that the NDP voted against the protection of Canada from terrorists act, and I believe you answered a House question yesterday on exactly that.

Could you comment further on the need for this very important law, Bill C-44, which clearly helps to clarify the law under which CSIS needs to operate?

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** Absolutely, and I thank you for this question.

Even as the bill was tabled, members were provided with the opportunity to get some technical briefings. Those who have benefited from those briefings then could clearly understand that due to some court decisions, it was important to update the CSIS Act, which has not really been updated for the last 30 years. This is exactly what the protection of Canada from terrorists act is doing, clarifying the authority of CSIS.

One important thing, which is now obvious to us, is clearly defining that CSIS has the capability to operate abroad. That seems very obvious, but this needed to be added to the CSIS Act. This is exactly what Bill C-44 achieves.

While we can protect witnesses, which is very important for an intelligence agency, there is a mechanism that anyone who could be accused under the information provided by those witnesses is entitled to a fair trial. Once again, there is the amicus curiae legal mechanism so that the law will help the court and help CSIS in its mandate while clarifying its mandate.

There are some other elements in that bill like improving and accelerating the removal of dual citizenship. This bill was already adopted, but now we are willing to move forward as the terrorist threat evolves. These are the measures in the bill. These are certainly measures that I would appreciate and seek support on from all members.

Unfortunately, as I have pointed out—through the chair, of course—I would have expected that the NDP support this important bill, especially as the terrorist threat is real. I was given the opportunity to highlight this fact, so were the experts in this area. Unfortunately we did not get support. I still feel that when we're placed in front of accurate facts, we should seek support.

You may recall that the NDP did not support the Combating Terrorism Act. I think we as Canadians can be very relieved today to know that charges have been laid under this new act. With the law we have in place in this country, terrorists are now prevented from committing a terrorist act. This is why it is important as legislators that we provide the tools to those who are there to protect us. This is why I intend to come back in the near future with additional measures that will fully comply with our Canadian law, but in the

meantime will provide tools necessary for our national security agency and law enforcement agency to better protect Canadians.

• (1605)

**Mr. Ted Falk:** Thank you, Minister.

I find it very ironic that we're hearing from the NDP that they want your department to spend more money, yet they're voting against all the initiatives that your department is coming up with. They voted against the protection of Canada from terrorists act, and as you indicated they also voted against the Combating Terrorism Act. It would seem to me that when it comes to issues of national security, the NDP aren't getting it, and they're out of their depth.

You wanted to move this legislation along very quickly. Can you comment a little further on the seriousness of the nature of the threats that Canada is facing today? Why was it important to move the bill expeditiously?

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** We certainly rely on our experts to assess the threat level. Certainly that can be done either now or in the second hour of this important meeting, but at this point I would like to stress that we have to adjust to this evolving threat.

We were witness to those actions here in this very Parliament. As you will remember, you and I were in that very same room not so long ago.

This is why we won't overreact to the terrorist threat, but we won't under-react. This is why we are moving forward. We are also looking at what other western countries are doing when faced with a similar situation. I was in France recently. They are implementing a measure such as the one we already have implemented or are contemplating it for the near future. We are not alone in the fight against these barbaric actions that are taken by terrorists, and this is why we will move forward.

There is certainly an important need—as the courts said—for Bill C-44, the bill that is in front of Parliament now. As of now, CSIS does not have the same capability it had in the past. So it's not about adding new powers, it's just about restoring existing authorities so they can exchange information about terrorists who are travelling. This is why I feel...and once again, I really would have appreciated having the support of this committee.

This bill has to move as fast as we can do it as parliamentarians, so that we can restore the capability of CSIS to protect Canadians. I am confident that this bill will go back to the House in the coming days and that we will be able to see it move through the Senate quickly to get royal assent, so that CSIS can protect Canadians by two means—making sure, when they are establishing a bond of trust with a witness, that they can protect the witness and the witness can have some confidentiality, and of course making sure that we can exchange information with our partners.

• (1610)

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

Thank you, Mr. Falk.

Now, for the final seven minutes on the first round, Mr. Easter, please.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.



Welcome, Minister and agency heads. Thank you for coming.

Mr. Carmichael mentioned this, Minister, but he didn't really include all committee members. I think you can be assured that all committee members, ourselves on this side as well, would certainly pass on our regards and best wishes with respect to the RCMP officer who was shot early this morning.

With respect to the last question, Mr. Minister, on exchanging information with other agencies abroad, and the interchange you just had, I was in Washington, D.C., yesterday. I met with the chair of the homeland security committee, among others, and this is one of their concerns. They're wondering where Canada is on that.

Bill C-44 doesn't deal with that issue, as I see it. I believe you were anticipating bringing in other legislation, but to my knowledge Bill C-44 does not deal with that specific issue. It deals with protecting informants and sources abroad in a number of other areas, but it does not deal with what we just talked about. That will require other legislation. Am I correct?

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** You're right, Mr. Easter.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Thank you.

That will be coming forward in other legislation, but I can tell you, having met the chair of the homeland security committee in the United States yesterday, that is a concern, and I'm well aware of it; I faced it when I was in your position.

Let me go back to the statement you made on October 8, where you said, "We know of about 80 who have returned to Canada"—meaning people who have been involved with a terrorist entity abroad. This is your statement, and I quote:

Let me be clear that these individuals posing a threat to our security at home have violated Canadian law, as passed by this Parliament in the Combating Terrorism Act.

You said they have violated Canadian law, Mr. Minister. You're the top law enforcement official in the country. That was October 8. Have any of them been arrested as yet?

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** As you know, there have been many individuals who have been arrested under the current laws, and if we want to have more arrests, we need to make sure that our law enforcement has the appropriate tools.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** None of those 80 have been arrested, have they?

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** Let me make one point very clear. You have been in a capacity to know that there is a difference between having intelligence and being able to present a robust charge that will stick and bring an individual, or any terrorist in this case, to jail. That's why we have to look at the way our system is working, and we also have to look at the tools that we are currently providing to our law enforcement. Once again, we may feel that an individual can represent a threat but not necessarily have the evidence, because as you are well aware, we are in a state of law. We are proud of that, and this is how we conduct ourselves when dealing with terrorists. This is why we, as parliamentarians, have such an important role to set the rules, and this is why Bill C-44 and the coming legislation are so important.

●(1615)

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** If it's an evidentiary shortcoming, then we, as a committee, need to know what needs to be done to fix that. You said yourself that they have violated Canadian law. If they have violated Canadian law, it seems to me that they should be able to be arrested.

Section 83.181 of the Criminal Code states:

Everyone who leaves or attempts to leave Canada...for the purpose of committing an act or omission outside Canada that, if committed in Canada, would be an offence under subsection 83.18(1) is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than 10 years.

It seems to me that that section of the act should be able to be used with these 80 folks who have returned to Canada from fighting with what we have named as terrorist entities.

Has that act been used to charge anyone in Canada? I know one individual was charged six months after he left the country, but he isn't in Canada. Has anyone in Canada been charged under that section? If not, why not?

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** I can come back with more specifics because, as you know, the situation is evolving. Our police officers are constantly reviewing our terrorist files. As you know, there are accusations that have been laid under the Combating Terrorism Act, so these are new tools that have been provided to our police officers. I will be happy to come back with more specific details.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** The reason I'm forceful on that point, Mr. Minister, is that, if at the moment anybody out there is thinking of going abroad to fight with ISIS or ISIL or anyone else, I think that being aware of the fact that somebody has been charged under this section would be a deterrent to going abroad and doing that. That's why. Do you want to add further to that?

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** Mr. Easter, depending on the time you still have in your question, and there will be another round, my expert officials will be happy.... Are we close on time?

**The Chair:** You have about 15 seconds left, if you'd like to respond.

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** I think your question deserves a fulsome answer, and I suggest you address it to my colleagues in the next round.

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

Now, we move on to the second round.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Doré Lefebvre, you have the floor for five minutes.

**Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Minister, I would like to thank you and your officials for being here today to answer our questions. We greatly appreciate it.

My questions have to do mainly with the Correctional Service of Canada.

First, I would like to get the numbers straight. You spoke about a decrease in the prison population. However, in the past five years, there has been a 10% increase in this population. There are approximately 15,200 inmates a day in our prisons.

One other thing has increased, and that is double-bunking in the cells. There has been a rising trend in this respect in the past five years. There has been a 93% increase, which is huge. In the past five years, we have also seen a 17% increase in cases of assault and fights among inmates and a 6.7% increase in incidents of the use of force.

There are these incidents and problems among the inmates. This is of great concern to the officers from the Correctional Service of Canada and the Office of the Correctional Investigator, who submitted a report to that end.

Are you going to continue to let these numbers rise? Are you going to continue to use double-bunking, knowing that it is not solving the problems in our federal prisons?

• (1620)

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** Thank you for your question.

I have the opportunity to appear fairly regularly before the committee, and I hope to come back again soon to discuss new legislation we are putting in place and to seek your support in the fight against terrorism.

To come back to your questions about correctional services, we are honoured to have the commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada with us, and I will ask him to answer your questions.

Previously, I would have simply said that we are not seeing what we had predicted. I would even use the word “apocalyptic” because we had predicted that our penal institutions were going to be full. That has not happened. We are even implementing a plan for additional cells.

I will let the commissioner provide the numbers because, obviously, they are constantly changing. As far as I know, they are not as high as you mentioned. In recent months, we have seen a decrease in the prison population.

In terms of double-bunking, I would like to point out that it is a common and widespread practice in western systems. I have even visited detention centres that had dormitories. There are all kinds of accommodation—if I can say that—for inmates. We think this is a common practice.

Moreover, I would like to commend the correctional services officers for the important work they do.

On that note, I would ask the commissioner to provide an update.

**Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre:** If I may, I will have the opportunity to come back to this during other question periods. In fact, I have many questions to ask you about the Correctional Service of Canada. However, while you are here with us during this first hour, I would like to talk to you about your positions on certain matters.

When I speak with correctional officers, they often tell me about problems with the aging population. We see it; the populations in our prisons are getting a lot older. Often, the correctional officers have to be involved in palliative care for inmates.

Have you thought of a strategy to review the operation of the prison system? This is also part of what the Office of the Correctional Investigator is calling for. He is asking for clarification on this and for review of the plan on how to deal with these older inmates, who can no longer get around and who, sometimes, have oxygen tanks. Will a medical service be put in place or will we stick to having correctional officers distribute pills to inmates?

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** First, the correctional services are doing a remarkable job with the population in federal penitentiaries. There are medical services. As you know, there are also rehabilitation services and training services.

Once again, the commissioner will be able to provide details on all the provisions put in place to adapt to the changing profile of inmates in the institutions.

I can assure you that the correctional services officers do a remarkable job. I have had the opportunity to visit the institutions, and I can assure you that inmates are receiving top-quality medical services.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. The time has expired.

Ms. Ablonczy, you have five minutes.

**Hon. Diane Ablonczy:** Thank you to all of you who are here.

It strikes me that in this Christmas season of peace and goodwill to all, you deal with the other side of the coin. We know that's not an easy task. We appreciate the fact that people like you are carrying a heavy load on behalf of the rest of us, so that we can feel secure and contented, not just at this time of year but all year round.

Minister, we were just looking at a section of the budget implementation act that had to do with expanding the DNA indices, the kind of information that law enforcement can now collect in terms of DNA.

Why do you think this expansion of the DNA bank is so important and what do you believe will be the benefit to Canadians?

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** I really want to thank you for your question because we can be proud as a country of the DNA system we have put in place.

Once again, this is a system that has been ongoing for many years without any major change or improvement, and the technology is evolving. The current DNA missing persons index.... Actually, we will be given the opportunity to support tonight very important votes that will take place. Not only will we support the budget implementation act but also this very important bill.

There are five indices that will be added to the current system. Our deputy commissioner knows this issue very well. Let me just put the emphasis on those indices that will allow the collection of DNA at a crime scene, DNA of a missing person, DNA of relatives of a missing person, and also DNA of people working on crime scenes, so that the results are not conflicted when they are doing these analyses.

This is a major step, a major improvement. This is done in a very reasonable and practical manner. One objective is to bring closure to families of the fallen, like Ms. Peterson, or any other family who is wondering what has happened. This is the objective. Those indices will be added.

One important issue is that the current... There will be a barrier established between the DNA of a relative and the DNA of a criminal. There are firewalls to protect privacy and the rights of those who are sharing information. These provisions are in the bill. It has been very well crafted and I would be happy to provide you with more detail.

Once again, we're going to make a leap forward to help victims in their willingness to seek the truth on what sometimes happens in tragic events.

● (1625)

**Hon. Diane Ablonczy:** Minister, obviously, you're aware of the testimony we heard from Judy Peterson. We were all so impressed with her courage because she's been working, after the disappearance of her daughter, for 20 years to get changes to the DNA bank.

I know my colleague, Mr. Easter, was very helpful to Ms. Peterson and she gave him credit for that and appreciated that. I know she appreciates that, hopefully. Finally, tonight, this expansion that she's been working for will take place. We're happy about that.

On a different topic, a lot of people I talk to are really worried about people, especially young Canadians, some of whom have lived all their life in this wonderful country, becoming radicalized and even leaving the country to fight against the values that have made us all safe and secure here.

Could you talk about what your department is doing to address this radicalization?

**The Chair:** Mr. Blaney, that would probably require a lengthy response, I understand, to that question, but you have about 15 seconds to do that.

**Hon. Steven Blaney:** The four pillars of our counterterrorism strategy are oriented toward prevention, detection, denying someone from committing an attack, and responding. So in the realm of prevention, the RCMP is doing a lot of outreach towards communities throughout the country. We have cross-cultural round tables and we are also training our officers. I'm sure Deputy Commissioner Cabana can expand on this. Once again, if I may add, I think that the late Jim Flaherty will certainly wink at us, when the budget implementation act is adopted and Lindsey's law will become the law of the land, from his Irish paradise. He certainly can find some comfort in this.

Thank you.

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

That concludes our first hour.

Minister Blaney, we will suspend very briefly and certainly you'll be leaving, sir. Then we'll go right back at it.

● (1625)

(Pause)

● (1630)

**The Chair:** We're now back in session.

Yes, on point of order, Mr. Garrison...

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Given that the minister wasn't able to appear until today, we are I think beyond the period in which we could actually vote on the supplementary estimates. I'm just asking if my understanding is correct.

**The Chair:** That's correct.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** So we will not be able to vote on these because the minister was saying he'd like to have our support, and of course it's disappointing for us. If he could have appeared earlier, he would have had our support on these supplementary estimates, but because of the timing he wasn't here in time for us to cast those votes. Because we do a lot of committee business in camera, that's all I can say about that. But since he did raise the topic, we would have been voting in favour of these supplementary estimates had he been here in time for us to do that.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

Of course, these reports are deemed back without an amendment. So at that point then there is no report on that, but I thank you for your point of order and I think you've made your point.

Thank you very much. We will now go to first round of questioning.

Ms. James, please, you have seven minutes.

**Ms. Roxanne James (Scarborough Centre, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to all of the officials who are here today.

I'm going to start with the deputy minister for public safety on the cyberbullying campaign.

Could you talk a little bit about what we've done so far. It's something that I fully support. I actually did an announcement for phase two of this back in September at a local grade 7 and grade 8 school in my own riding. I'm going to ask you to elaborate on this, but it was the introduction of an interactive campaign so that students or youth could actually log on—or someone my age if we wanted to see what it was all about—and based on what you typed in, the results came back with the person on the screen either smiling and happy with the comments that someone might have typed on the screen versus something that someone typed in that made them feel uncomfortable or sad.

It was quite an extraordinary thing to see. It was interesting to also witness the students who were present for that announcement because they were smiling at parts of it, and in the other parts when they're seeing what the results were on the screen it was quite interesting to see how they reacted, as well.

I'm just wondering if you could talk a little bit about that and where we are on that, and perhaps even how well used that website has been to date.

•(1635)

**Mr. François Guimont (Deputy Minister, Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness):** Thank you for the question.

In the past, the department sponsored cyberbullying campaigns that were very effective, and a bit—if you wish, I'll use my own words—passive in nature. You've probably seen youths looking at something, passing it on to a friend, and then you see a police officer asking questions. The resources that we got—and your question is very timely in the sense that the Treasury Board provided us with approval to move forward with this new campaign, which is more interactive in nature, as you stated.

Our folks at Public Safety worked with specialists in trying to create something that was more, I'm tempted to say, attractive to youths. For those of you who have seen this tool, it's quite impressive. The first time I saw it before it was made public, I was very much surprised to see how interesting it is in the sense of you being able to literally interact with an individual and punch in a few words and see what their reaction is, which is, as you stated, either a rewarding type of reaction or body language, or a more negative one.

The obvious question I asked was—I remember asking this question—how new is this? Has this been used in the past? It's fairly recent. It has been used elsewhere, but it's fairly rare, if you wish. So I was quite pleased to see that the department would be moving to the leading edge. It's been very popular for that very reason. I don't have the numbers here with me, but I can certainly file it with the committee for sure, and it is evolving, as you might imagine, every day. The feedback that I got from my folks was that it was very much enjoyed by the youth. It gives them an appreciation for what words mean, which is essentially at the core of what that interactive video is.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** I remember when I did that announcement and there were a few giggles or something in the audience at some of the comments, but once they saw the expression of the person who was reading on the other end it became silent in the room. I think that was the key to the Stop Hating Online campaign. Anyone who's listened to this committee simply has to go to the web and type in “stop hating online campaign” and you'll find it. I think it's an excellent resource tool for parents to check out.

I have a question for the RCMP as well. The RCMP accountability act came into force this week. There was an announcement that you did with the Minister of Public Safety, not yourself, but the commissioner. I know with my previous committee work on the status of women, the commissioner was at that committee. He came in to testify. We were studying harassment in the workplace. I know that some of the things that were discussed in that committee have played into the RCMP accountability act with regard to some of new things that are involved in that act about the new code of conduct, and so on. I'm wondering if you could comment on some of these changes. I know it had significant changes because the act hadn't been significantly changed in almost 25 years with regards to harassment in the workplace, codes of conduct, and so on. Could you speak to that for a few moments?

Thanks.

**D/Commr Mike Cabana:** Absolutely. Thank you very much for your question. I could probably speak on it for the rest of the time that we have.

As you pointed out, and as Minister Blaney pointed out, it provides for the RCMP a whole new regime for management of human resources and code of conduct issues, including harassment. Harassment now has its own regime separate from the code of conduct processes. It also led to an expansion or creation of a new agency, an oversight agency, for the RCMP. I'm not quite sure what else I could provide in terms of details.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** The legislation passed in 2013, I believe, but it did take a period of time to come into force with the scope and nature of this particular act. I know from when the commissioner did appear, and even in the status of women talks, discussions were ongoing with employees, senior management, and other stakeholders across the country. When we take a look at how quickly it was implemented, that's a terrific achievement.

•(1640)

**D/Commr Mike Cabana:** Thank you. There was a lot of work that was done as you pointed out. Consultation was very extensive, including with the employees of the RCMP and regular members, as well as public service employees and the civilian members.

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

Now we'll go to Mr. Garrison, please for seven minutes.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I neglected in my last round to add our concerns for the wounded RCMP member in Kamloops. I understand he's a 13-year veteran and father of two, and we all hope for a speedy and complete recovery.

I'm going to ask my question to Mr. Cenaiko from the Parole Board of Canada. We had a change to recast pardons as record suspensions. We had an increase in the fees from \$150 to \$631. These are for people who have finished their sentences, are trying to get back into employment, and are trying to get their lives back together having paid the penalties they were ascribed. I have two questions.

One is that last year we were seeing a drop in applications for record suspensions that was attributed by many people to the increase in the fee to \$631, which is something very tough for someone who needs the record suspension to get a job. The second is that last year we had a backlog of some 15,000 applications. I want to know if you had enough resources to make a dent in that backlog.

**Mr. Harvey Cenaiko (Chairperson, Parole Board of Canada):** Thank you very much for the question.

There was a drop in the number of record suspensions that individuals applied for. However, that also has to do with the fact that, under the new legislation, the timing has gone from three years to five years for summary conviction offences. For indictable offences, the new waiting period has gone from five years to 10 years, so there was a drop in the number. However, this past year we did still receive approximately 14,254 applications, and we accepted 9,500 that were completed as processing through.

In relation to the second part of your question in relation to the backlog, the board has been able to make significant progress in reducing the backlog over the last two years with funding through internal efficiencies. We had a total of 22,230 files that were being reviewed in the backlog, and we're now at 10,186 applications.

The board is currently focusing its efforts on clearing the backlog of applications, including some related to offences tried summarily, and we'll continue with those for summary offences. We're working on approximately 3,500 of those right now, which we hope to have completed by the end of this fiscal year, so over the next three and a half months. Also, we have approximately 6,700 applications related to indictable offences, which we'll continue to work on as resources permit. With our current resources, we expect to have close to 70% of the backlog cleared by March 31 of this fiscal year. As we move into the new fiscal year, we'll remain committed to working on the backlog, including that related to indictable offences, as resources permit.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Thank you. The progress you have made is very encouraging.

I wonder if you have any estimate of time for that last 30%. What's the plan for clearing that last 30% of the backlog? What timelines are available?

**Mr. Harvey Cenaiko:** I can't give you a timeline, but I can tell you that we will work on it as resources permit, because the record suspension staff will continue to work on the record suspensions. We are governed by statute and timelines on record suspension. For a summary conviction offence, we have to have that. Once it's accepted and we are able to process it because everything has been submitted properly, we have six months to complete the file. For indictable offences, we have one year.

Those are ongoing as we speak, and we're maintaining our timelines under the User Fees Act. In the case of the pardons, we're completing those as we can with the resources we have.

• (1645)

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** So you are staying within those timelines.

**Mr. Harvey Cenaiko:** For the backlog we aren't, because we're not governed by the legislation regarding the pardon backlog, which were the old cases prior to the change in legislation in 2012.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** I know my office and several other offices have had queries from people who say they've been waiting two to three years since their application was approved. Would that be possible?

**Mr. Harvey Cenaiko:** The vast majority of the files we've had have been for summary convictions, for things like impaired driving, thefts, and drug offences.

The indictable offences obviously include things that are much more serious: major frauds, serious assaults, sexual assaults, and even.... Some of those wouldn't even be considered under the new legislation. Some of those individuals who have pardon applications don't want a record suspension because they will not qualify under the new legislation since some of them have more than three federal offences. Under the new legislation they will not qualify for a record suspension, so they'll stay in the pardon hopper, so to speak, until we get to them. But we will process them with the resources we have.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** You have one minute left.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** One minute—that presents a little bit of a problem.

I want to turn to CBSA. In 2012 cuts announced for CBSA amounted to a plan of \$143 million, and the estimates say you've lapsed \$194 million. Those are relatively significant numbers.

At the time there was a question about positions in the intelligence branch of CBSA. At the time, the union said that 100 positions—not people, but positions—were going to be eliminated from the intelligence branch, which obviously helps keep our borders safe, not something most people think of as a back-office function. Can you tell me whether those 100 positions were in fact eliminated?

**Mr. Luc Portelance (President, Canada Border Services Agency):** Thank you.

Perhaps just to clarify the two separate issues, the lapse that you referred to is unrelated to the intelligence officers. That lapse was actually mostly reprofiled on projects, money we couldn't spend one year into another.

On your specific question with respect to intelligence officers, those positions were indeed reduced, as we had promised through the deficit reduction action plan. But if I can reassure the member, in assessing the intelligence needs of the CBSA, we took into consideration the existing number of intelligence officers versus the total complement of the CBSA. I spent 24 years working in intelligence for CSIS, and my assessment was that we had in fact too many resources in the intelligence function versus the complement of border services officers.

I can assure you that this was done very diligently with full comprehension of where we were reducing. From my perspective, I did not think that we were actually reducing the intelligence capacity of the CBSA, but cutting in areas that were not necessarily associated with collecting intelligence but were more analytical, and areas where I could actually gain that analysis from some of my partner agencies.

We made those cuts with full confidence that we wouldn't reduce our effectiveness.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Perhaps I can sneak in one question.

**The Chair:** Very briefly.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** The Federation of Canadian Municipalities had asked for ongoing talks with the RCMP about the costs of contract policing and the ability of the RCMP to supply the personnel for those contracts. Are you in talks with the Canadian federation of municipalities on that question of costs and staffing of the contracts?

**D/Commr Mike Cabana:** I'm sorry, I'm not aware of any discussions ongoing currently with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

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

Mr. Lauzon.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC):** Thank you very much, Chair.

It's a pleasure. I'm a visitor at this committee, as is Mr. Portelance.

Mr. Portelance, you're probably aware I come from the riding of Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, which includes Akwesasne, which might be somewhat familiar to you. I want to give you an opportunity to praise the good work that your people are doing down in my area. There are a lot of increases in seizures in recent times. I want to commend you. You don't have a very pleasant job, but I think you're doing well and you're increasing the seizures, so that's all good for my area.

I guess in doing that you work with the RCMP and with IBET, and that seems to be working extremely well. We've put more resources to that and I think the dividends are being realized. I know there was a \$50-million seizure some time ago. Can you give us a list of some of the highlights of the recent seizures? I see them in the newspaper and they're pretty significant—right in my area. That has to be hurting the organized crime in that area. Can you perhaps just give us a thumbnail?

• (1650)

**Mr. Luc Portelance:** Certainly. I don't have a list of the various seizures.

It is a very dynamic environment, as you suggest. But I would say that we are working closely and effectively with law enforcement partners. Obviously we have responsibility for the port of entry in Cornwall. That is one of the 20 busiest ports of entry in Canada, so just in terms of the flow of legitimate people and goods it's an important port of entry.

From an enforcement perspective, because we focus on the port of entry, we work very closely with not just the RCMP but with the OPP and Sûreté du Québec, as you know—better than I do perhaps. That area has a number of jurisdictions that come into play, including our U.S. partners, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, New York State Police, and so on. The collaboration is quite effective and the seizures actually sometimes occur away from the border. I suspect that there are probably more seizures away from our port of entry. But oftentimes it's because those activities are being pushed away from the port of entry.

I would also make the point that we do that work in collaboration as well with the community of Akwesasne, the Mohawk police, and the band council. It is a very dynamic environment. We have effective liaison with the community of Akwesasne and the

Akwesasne police service. I think all in all for us we continue to balance both the travel of legitimate people and goods—because that remains important—with also focusing on seizures.

If I may, the last point I would make is that we've recently opened a new temporary facility in Cornwall, actually on our side of the island, which has provided for better flow of traffic and better opportunity for our officers to effect their duties in a professional manner.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** I'm very pleased and I'm getting great comments. I encourage you to keep up the good work.

I have a question for the deputy commissioner.

There were some reports yesterday in the integrity commissioner's report that some of the flights for the RCMP were a slight bit overweight. What is your reaction in response to that observation?

**D/Commr Mike Cabana:** Mr. Chair, thank you very much for the question.

I think we need to put a little bit of context around yesterday's reports. Very succinctly, I'll try to give you the context.

In November 2013, we were advised that the Office of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner had initiated an investigation on our air services branch. On October 31 of this year, we were provided with a draft copy of the report. In the interim, we provided full collaboration to the integrity commissioner and his personnel, in order for them to be able to conduct the investigation.

I think what was lost in some of the reporting over the last few days is the fact that prior to the initiation of the investigation by the integrity commissioner in August 2013, the RCMP had approached Transport Canada with concerns, and had made a request for them to have a look at air services, including our office here in Ottawa, and for a review, a study of practices there. We worked with them to develop a plan.

By the time the draft report was received, we had already implemented the plan to address the issues, with the help of Transport Canada, .

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** You can't beat that. I commend you for that, and that's the kind of reaction we would expect. Keep up the good work.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

• (1655)

**The Chair:** You still have a minute if you'd like, otherwise we'll go on to the next.

We will now go on to—yes, another minute?

**Mr. John Carmichael:** Are you sharing with Ms. Ablonczy?

**Mr. Guy Lauzon:** No.

**Mr. John Carmichael:** May I pick up the other half of that?

**The Chair:** Yes, you may.

**Mr. John Carmichael:** I would like to address a question to Commissioner Head.

Commissioner, I asked the minister earlier about some of the estimates and the results that have been posted. With regard to returning the money, I have to assume that this is due to the projected growth of the prison population that simply has not materialized. I wonder if you could comment on that, if in fact that is the case.

Could you tell us what the prison population is today and what it was projected to be, sir?

**Mr. Don Head (Commissioner, Correctional Service of Canada):** Thank you for the question.

As of today, the incarcerated population is 14,983 offenders in 43 penitentiaries. When we talk about those significant overestimates that were done back in early 2008 based on 2005 data, the estimates had put projections up to 18,000 inmates. Those have not materialized at all.

We gauge the increase in the population against March 2010 when significant legislative changes came in, such as the Safe Streets and Communities Act. Since that time, the prison population has increased by around a thousand. We were at around 14,027 back in March 2010, and we've been hovering around the 15,000 mark for literally the last year or so.

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

Mr. Easter, you have seven minutes, please.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

According to the public accounts, the RCMP, CBSA and CSIS lapsed by some \$371 million. Now, I know deputy that it's not as straightforward as it looks, in terms of lapsing of money.

My question is for the RCMP. The RCMP lapsed by \$158.6 million, yet the Commissioner of the RCMP told the Senate national security committee on October 27, and I'll quote him:

Frankly speaking, one of the challenges in managing and leading a police organization is that you never have enough money—you never do.

I wonder if the deputy commissioner could connect the dots for us.

Was it not possible to use some of that \$158 million for human resources? Were they not available? Could you clarify those numbers and tell us why?

**D/Commr Mike Cabana:** Actually, I can probably provide you with a little bit of clarity around this.

The \$158.6 million in lapsed funding can be broken down as follows: \$15.2 million was in a frozen allotment, which means it cannot be used for anything else; \$61 million was carried forward for projects in the new year. The true lapse was \$82 million and the operating fund part of the \$82 million was \$9.4 million, which is 0.47%.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** When I talked to some in the rank and file, the members and member reps complained, at least to me, about salary levels. They said that salary levels within the RCMP are not keeping up with the salary levels of some of the other police forces, whether it's Calgary, Vancouver, or whatever.

As a result, I'm told the RCMP is losing fully trained officers that have come through the training depot and they're going to other

jurisdictions with other police forces where they don't run the risk of getting sent to an isolated location.

Can you give us any numbers in terms of either direct numbers or percentage of your members that you may be losing on an annual basis to police forces of other jurisdictions? Given these indications, I think there is a problem in terms of either working conditions or salary levels.

• (1700)

**D/Commr Mike Cabana:** Unfortunately, I'm not in the position now to provide you the actual numbers that you're looking for, but the reality though is not a new reality.

I have 34 years in the RCMP and 34 years ago we were still experiencing back then members who were completing their training and were being transferred to remote areas where they were having second thoughts and were then finding employment in different law enforcement agencies.

The reverse is also equally true. We have members of other police agencies that consistently join the RCMP.

If there's an interest in the committee here—

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** If you could, Deputy Commissioner, it's not an absolute priority, but if you could put together the numbers of RCMP people out to other police jurisdictions, it would at least be information that we could maybe have a debate about at committee.

To the Canada Border Services Agency, one of the complaints I get from businesses is that all too often when they come across the Ambassador Bridge or the other bridge—but the Ambassador Bridge is where I get the most complaints—they see CBSA booths not filled. They are sitting idle with traffic backed up, especially if there's a football or baseball game in Detroit, and at busy times when traffic is heavy. I just emailed Ambassador Bridge while we were here and they said they're moving fine right at the moment, but it's not a busy time.

I have two questions. First, why are those booths empty by CBSA during busy times?

Second, in the Ambassador Bridge area, or the Detroit area, actual traffic now is still only about 40% below what it was in 2003, so our traffic is not nearly as heavy, yet we're still having backups. We also have the new bridge to nowhere at the moment. With that situation, the distance of the bridges apart, can you tell us how many more new Canada Border Services Agency booths you're going to require to man the new bridge as compared to the current situation?

**Mr. Luc Portelance:** Thank you.

Well, I guess I have a couple of thoughts. In terms of the statistics, the 40% reduction since 2003, I don't have those numbers. However, I've seen the numbers since 2008, and the numbers have been holding steady at the Ambassador Bridge, and in fact in the land mode in general. The Ambassador Bridge is our busiest crossing, as you know.

In terms of empty booths, for the last three to four years, we've developed a very elaborate system to assess the percentage of our booths that are occupied at any given time. To do that, we pay attention to what's going on on the other side of the border. For instance, in Detroit, between the tunnel and the Ambassador Bridge, we will pay attention to whether the Red Wings or the Pistons are playing, or the Tigers, whether or not there are any events. We're quite conscious of the fact that there's a lot of cross-border traffic associated with events.

Our entire plan, both tactical and strategic, is based on historical knowledge of traffic, of trends, and it is amplified based on knowledge of what will be happening on any given night. I wouldn't expect that the booths should always be full. We simply don't have the business plan to do that, and you'd find that's true, not just for us, but for CBP as well.

Our wait times at the Ambassador Bridge are generally pretty good, in the sense that we try to provide not much more than 10 minutes at off-peak hours, and not much more than about 20 minutes at on-peak hours. Now, that ebbs and flows, but for the most part, our wait-time strategy across the country is pretty effective.

The other factor is that our commercial clients almost have a better knowledge than we do of the trends, and usually they cycle through when they know that the wait times are going to be lower. We also post our wait times. As you know, people can go online right now and know specifically what the wait times are at any of our top locations.

Since last year, we've started posting historical wait times. The purpose of that is to allow the travelling public to assess ahead of time what they can expect. Rather than saying that right now they have an hour or a 15-minute wait time, we are predicting wait times from what the historical wait times were. That's an attempt by us to start shifting the patterns, and pushing people to times where we have less traffic burden. Thus far, it's been quite—

• (1705)

**The Chair:** Mr. Portelance, we're cutting into the next speaker's time.

Madame Doré Lefebvre, you have two or three minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My questions are mainly for Mr. Head.

I have a question about the recommendations made by the correctional investigator in "Risky Business: An Investigation of the Treatment and Management of Chronic Self-Injury Among Federally Sentenced Women". That report on self-injury made 16 recommendations. We know that self-injury is a major problem in the prisons.

Has there been any follow-up on the recommendations in the report? Where are we headed with that?

[*English*]

**Mr. Don Head:** We've put in place a series of initiatives to address the recommendations of the Correctional Investigator as brought forward.

A lot of that has been focused on responding to the needs of self-harming women. That's where a lot of our time, energy, and reallocated resources have gone. We've put in place a more stringent review committee, made up of health care professionals, including psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and front-line nurses, to consistently engage and review the various women who are self-harming.

The short answer is that we've put in place a lot of new approaches, processes, to address the points that the Correctional Investigator has raised with us.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre:** Excellent.

I would like to come back to a question I asked the minister earlier about the older population in the prison system, which has some impact on the work of correctional officers, depending on the prison.

There is a prison in Montée-Saint-François, in my riding, where the prison population is mainly sex offenders. For the most part, these offenders were caught a long time after their offence. So they are very old.

Do you have a strategy for these people? Are you putting anything in place to deal with these new challenges?

[*English*]

**Mr. Don Head:** We have in place a series of approaches to deal with aging offenders.

As you can appreciate, individuals who stay with us for long periods of time, who are as old as I am or older, come with a significant number of health care issues. One of the challenges for us is around palliative care and dealing with individuals who end up passing away in custody. Again, we put a lot of time and energy into looking at how we respond to the needs, for instance, whether there are opportunities to take special cases to the Parole Board for consideration. We've also gone to the point of using other offenders for peer support. This has been a program that we've found to be quite helpful in terms of helping elderly offenders, and in some cases, individuals in palliative care.

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

Colleagues, we have bells at 5:15 with 15-minute bells only. We have committee business just for a very short while. We will now thank our witnesses for coming.

You have a point of order, Ms. Ablonczy.

**Hon. Diane Ablonczy:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.



I'd just like to correct the record. I said earlier that I had been here longer than Mr. Easter. I've since been informed by an unimpeachable source that we were elected at the same time. The only thing I can say in defence of such a regrettable error is that my friend Mr. Easter does not look old enough to have been here as long as I have.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

•(1710)

**The Chair:** The chair will take that comment in the spirit of Christmas.

We will suspend for one minute, and then we will go back in camera for committee business.

*[Proceedings continue in camera]*

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