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Chair: The Honourable John McKay



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• (0845)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.)): I see quorum, so we can begin.

It's our privilege to welcome Minister Blair, for the first time but likely not the last time, to the meeting of the public safety committee.

Before we invite Minister Blair to address the committee, I want to raise an issue with the presentation of the supplementary estimates.

I've now asked about three or four people to correlate or explain the votes requested and the numbers that are being asked of us.

For instance, the amount for the Canada Border Services Agency in vote 1b is \$971,827, but the amount for the Canada Border Services Agency in the table of expenditures is \$3.4 million. Similarly, with CSIS, it's a vote request of \$13 million, and then it's \$12 million. It goes on. The only number that correlates with the vote request is that of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police external review committee, which is \$639,278 in both instances.

This is sometimes more mysterious than electing a pope. Why estimates are presented this way, I have no idea. However, over the course of the next little while, if those who can explain this would do so, I'd appreciate it. Members, particularly new members—but members generally—are being asked to vote on estimates that don't seem to correlate with the other explanations.

With that caveat, I'm going to call upon Minister Blair to address us with his remarks.

Minister Blair.

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and good morning, honourable members.

I'm very pleased and honoured to have the opportunity to appear before this committee. I had the privilege of coming before you in a previous capacity, when I was the minister for border security and organized crime. Today is my first appearance, as the chair mentioned, in my new capacity as the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

I'm here today principally to present our supplementary estimates (B) for the Public Safety portfolio. To help explain these numbers, I have the tremendous benefit of being joined by some outstanding public servants. I am joined by ADM Monik Beauregard, represent-

ing the Deputy Minister of Public Safety Canada this morning; Commissioner Brenda Lucki, the commissioner of the RCMP; John Ossowski, president of the CBSA; Michelle Tessier, who is here representing CSIS director David Vigneault; Anne Kelly, our commissioner of Correctional Services Canada; and last but not least, Jennifer Oades, president of the Parole Board.

Mr. Chair, I am very proud to have been entrusted with the responsibility for this portfolio by the Prime Minister. I feel sometimes as though I've spent my life getting ready for this job. I'm proud of the professionalism and dedication of all the officials, and all of the members they lead, who work so hard to protect the safety and security of Canadians each and every day.

The threats that Canada faces are numerous, complex and always evolving. As a government, we are committed to ensuring that those who work in the Public Safety portfolio have the resources they need to respond swiftly and effectively. These supplementary estimates that we present to you today reflect that commitment. They also reflect a steadfast commitment to keeping Canadians safe while safeguarding their rights and freedoms. The portfolio as a whole is requesting adjustments for this fiscal year resulting in a net increase in authorities of \$75.6 million. In my opening remarks today, I will provide a broad overview and highlight some of the key items for the portfolio organizations, starting, if I may, with Public Safety Canada.

The department is estimating a decrease of \$48.9 million, or 5.1%, from the authorities that are available to date. The biggest contributing factor is a transfer of \$52.9 million from the Public Safety portfolio to the RCMP for the first nations community policing service. These funds are intended to pay for the policing services that are provided by the RCMP in accordance with agreements with Public Safety, the provinces and territories, and first nations. This decrease is offset to some extent by some additional funding for the department.

For example, in these estimates, Public Safety is seeking an additional \$3.5 million in funding following one-time federal payments to the City of Toronto and the City of Burnaby, B.C. More specifically, \$1.5 million was provided to the City of Toronto this past August. As you may recall, the city was experiencing a very significant surge in gun violence and street gang activity. As a result, one-time funding was provided for immediate support to the Toronto Police Service to combat gun and gang violence and to keep our communities safe. The federal contribution, by the way, was matched by the municipality and by the province, because all three orders of government recognized the urgency and immediacy of the need for help. In September, \$2 million was provided to the City of Burnaby to bolster the city's public safety and emergency preparedness capacity. This was specifically in response to the unique situation of being located at the terminus of the Trans Mountain pipeline.

The department also anticipates receiving transfers from other federal organizations, including just over \$750,000 from DND for the Anishinabek Police Service to police the former Camp Ipperwash; \$300,000 from Canadian Heritage for Canada's anti-racism strategy; and nearly \$231,000 from Transport Canada for investments in important search and rescue coordination efforts across the country.

If I may, I'd like to turn to the supplementary estimates of other portfolio organizations. I'll start with the RCMP, which is seeking an increase of \$106.5 million, or 2.7%, over authorities to date. Some of the more notable items include a request for additional funding of \$27.5 million to help maintain the RCMP's force generation capacity at Depot to maintain 40 troops, and \$24.7 million for the contract policing program to address changes to its costs and revenue collection. The RCMP is also anticipating a net increase of nearly \$50 million in these estimates from other federal organizations. For example, the transfer related to the first nations community policing service, which I mentioned earlier, accounts for the vast majority of this net increase.

● (0850)

Other notable transfers include almost \$789,000 from Public Safety to help the RCMP build law enforcement training capacity to combat the scourge of drug-impaired driving; \$400,000 from Transport Canada for policing of the Confederation Bridge in the Northumberland Strait; and \$2.2 million from the RCMP to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to support the expansion of biometric screening in our immigration system.

If I may now turn to the CBSA, the agency's supplementary estimates reflect an increase of \$3.4 million, or one-tenth of a percentage point over the authorities to date. Of that amount, the CBSA is seeking \$500,000 to support the new multi-year immigration levels plan for 2019-21. This plan builds on the 2018-20 levels plan and features an increase of 800 protected persons to the 2019 target. As you may recall, Mr. Chair, the Government of Canada committed to welcoming 330,800 immigrants in calendar year 2019. This included 800 vulnerable women and girls from global conflict zones.

The CBSA also requested \$500,000 to fulfill its obligations under the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act. These funds will support the enforcement of sanctions-related inadmissi-

bility provisions, including operational intelligence and inland enforcement activities.

The CBSA's estimates also reflect a number of transfers to and from other federal organizations, including \$2.1 million from IRCC to share the costs of the air carrier support centres, which assist commercial air carriers in determining whether passengers possess the documentation required to travel to Canada; \$1.7 million from the RCMP to administer the import requirements under the Firearms Act; \$900,000 to Transport Canada to establish the passenger protect program operations centre, which will support the program's centralized screening and the resolution of airline calls from any potential matches; and finally, \$800,000 to Global Affairs Canada to help support departmental staff who are located at Canadian missions abroad.

Moving on to the Parole Board of Canada, it's seeking an increase of \$1.7 million, or 3.4%, in these estimates. That increase can largely be explained by a request for \$1.3 million in additional funding to implement measures related to expedited pardons for simple possession of cannabis. When an application is submitted as complete, the average processing time for a cannabis pardon application is seven days.

Finally, Mr. Chair, estimates for CSIS and the RCMP external review committee are also included in your documents today.

These are just a few of the items in this year's supplementary estimates (B) for the organizations in my portfolio, Mr. Chair. As you can see, it's a vast portfolio and it spans all aspects of keeping Canadians safe—from national, cyber and border security to policing and combatting crime and to emergency preparedness and beyond.

I'd like to take the opportunity to express my utmost confidence in the skills and abilities of all employees and members of each of these organizations that make up the portfolio, and in their leadership. I will always do everything I can to ensure they have the tools and resources they need to do their jobs.

With that, let me once again say how pleased I am to have had the opportunity and privilege of making my first appearance before this newly constituted committee. I look forward to the opportunity to work with all of you over the course of this parliamentary session.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are now happy to answer the questions of the committee members.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister Blair.

I will go back to my earlier remarks. The pluses and minuses between the ultimate request and the amount to be voted on are not publicly available until you referenced it in your speech, and only there partially. I take objection to the way in which the numbers are presented. They're based upon publicly available information that members were able to read up until 8:45 this morning. It's very difficult to follow the bouncing ball, if you will.

I wonder whether you have any chart or summary of the numbers on the votes as to how you get from \$971,827 to \$3.4 million. I'm sure it's available, and I'm sure it makes sense. I'm sure it adds and subtracts, but there isn't a person at this table who is being asked to vote on these numbers who could actually tell you how that number is arrived at.

I don't want to disrupt the normal flow of questions here, but if between now and when we are asked to vote, you or your officials can march us through the numbers so that the votes we make at the end of today will actually be votes that are understood by the members, I don't think that's an unreasonable request.

With that, I'm going to turn to Mr. Paul-Hus, please, for six minutes.

• (0855)

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Hello ladies and gentlemen.

Minister, you mentioned in your speech different amounts of money, but those amounts are quite low. On border services you are talking about \$500,000 out of \$3.4 million.

When we look at the numbers, there is one amount that is rather interesting and I would like some clarification on that. It is the one where the budget goes from \$1.9 billion to \$2.4 billion. That is an increase of \$500 million. That is not the same thing as \$500,000. We are talking about \$500 million.

Can you explain the need for that much money?

[English]

Hon. Bill Blair: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

As this pertains to the specific details of the CBSA budget, I wonder if you might indulge me in turning to the president of CBSA to provide that explanation.

Mr. John Ossowski (President, Canada Border Services Agency): Certainly. Thank you, Minister and Mr. Chair.

What we're really talking about here is money that may have appeared in previous estimates and it's finally showing up in these documents. The net amount for the supplementary estimates for this year is \$3.4 million.

To the chair's question, I could provide that clarity. The actual new money, the adjustment—

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Sir, excuse me, I have the floor. You may answer the Chair after if you like.

You are asking for an additional \$500 million and you don't want to answer my question. We are trying to determine what this \$500 million will be used for.

Along the same lines, when it comes to the border, before the election campaign Quebec was reimbursed \$300 million for the 2017 bill. What about 2018 and 2019?

Have you set aside money in your budget or in another department's budget to reimburse Quebec?

[English]

Hon. Bill Blair: I believe I understand what Monsieur Paul-Hus is asking.

Mr. Chair, there were reimbursements made to the Province of Quebec and to various municipalities in Ontario, and in other places, with respect to an extraordinary cost experience for the provision of services, principally temporary residence, to people who had come to the country as refugees. In Quebec, many of them had crossed the border irregularly. In other parts of the country, it was overwhelmingly people who had entered the country through regular channels and had made a few claims.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you, Minister.

[English]

Hon. Bill Blair: Those discussions are taking place with the Province of Quebec and a determination is not yet made, but additional payments are not reflected in these estimates.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you, Minister. You don't really know what we're talking about.

As far as the national crisis is concerned, the rail blockades, there is a management problem at the federal and provincial levels and at the first nations reserves when it comes to enforcing the law.

The railway is a critical infrastructure. When we talk about critical infrastructure, we talk about the railway, hydroelectric lines, waterways and ports. We invest billions of dollars in national security, national defence to protect our critical infrastructure. Currently, a few individuals are blocking the entire system.

What do you think the government should do to resolve the situation quickly and immediately? You may say that we need peaceful negotiations, but are there other measures we can take to resolve the situation?

[English]

The Chair: I would caution members that we are studying estimates. Humour me, and just tie the question somehow to the estimates.

I'm going to let the question ride, but it does concern me that when we gather officials to talk about budgets, we don't actually end up talking about budgets.

However, the question needs to be answered.

Minister Blair.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Allow me to say, Mr. Chair, that the current crisis is costing the economy hundreds of millions, even billions of dollars. We are talking about money.

The Chair: I understand.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you.

[*English*]

Hon. Bill Blair: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'll try to answer briefly in respect of the time of Mr. Paul-Hus.

There is excellent coordination now taking place. I want to assure this committee and the country that there is coordination between the federal government and the provincial authorities that have jurisdiction and responsibility for the enforcement of law in the places where these disruptions are taking place.

As well, we've been very clear that our expectation is that Canadians will obey the law—that message has been sent clearly—and it is the responsibility of the police of jurisdiction. The nexus to these estimates is that in the jurisdictions where the RCMP provides contract policing services, which are arranged through provincial policing agreements, the additional costs of those things, not in respect of this particular action but in other matters, are reflected in these estimates.

Mr. Chair, I'd also say that we have confidence in the police of jurisdiction to do their jobs. They're doing that, and they're doing that carefully and peaceably to resolve this.

• (0900)

The Chair: Mr. Motz apparently has one minute.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Minister and team for being here.

There are two parts to my question, Minister. You have promised to ban certain undisclosed firearms at a cost of millions, if not a lot more, hundreds of millions, maybe into the billions of dollars. You've also promised to implement Bill C-71. Your own bill, Bill C-71, which you voted for, would prevent you from arbitrarily classifying firearms. Are you waiting to implement Bill C-71 because you want to use that power to reclassify firearms, something you voted against? That's number one.

Number two, how much is it going to cost to fully compensate the law-abiding Canadians, to ban the firearms that you've classified as military-style assault rifles and handguns...that you plan to give to municipalities? How much money are we talking about for those? Don't you find it kind of convenient for you that you haven't implemented Bill C-71, because then you are allowed to do what

you can't do otherwise under that legislation, which is to classify firearms?

The Chair: That's a very important question, but Mr. Motz has not left you any time to answer it.

Ms. Damoff.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Minister, and all of your officials for being with us this morning.

Minister, I know that you recently met with Colten Boushie's family, as did I. Certainly issues of racism and policing were first and foremost in their minds. I have two questions for you. First, you mentioned the investments that we're putting into the anti-racism strategy. I want to ensure that funding will include funding against racism towards indigenous peoples in Canada. It's something that we sort of leave out of the conversation when we're talking about racism in this country.

The second part of that is with regard to policing first nations, community policing. I've heard for probably the last four years that we need to be putting more money into that.

I wonder if you could touch on those for us.

Hon. Bill Blair: Thank you very much, Ms. Damoff. Those are very important questions. It is in my mandate letter to ensure that all of our employees and members benefit from training on bias and eliminating bias and racism from all the services that we provide. I think we have a greater responsibility in the country, which is to address hate and racism in all its forms, including anti-indigenous racism.

I will also say just briefly that I did meet with that family. What was also very apparent to me was that we need to be very thoughtful about victim support services very broadly, because the pain of that family was quite apparent in the meeting I had with them.

With respect to first nations policing, I'm actually very proud that within my mandate I have been directed by the Prime Minister to make additional investments and improvements. It's apparent that we need to invest in the first nations policing program. If I may, let me speak to that.

We are currently exploring how best to advance these commitments to ensure that police officers and services all have the necessary tools and resources to do that. These commitments build upon previous investments that we've made of \$291 million over five years—which is a commitment we made in 2018—for the first nations policing program to improve officer safety.

Within these estimates—if I may bring it back to the estimates—we're seeking a transfer of \$52.9 million that will go to the RCMP from Public Safety Canada for the first nations community policing service. This will pay for police services that are provided by the RCMP, because first nations policing is provided in some jurisdictions by indigenous police services, and in many others by the RCMP.

Through these estimates, we are seeking \$167 million for the first nations program overall.

• (0905)

Ms. Pam Damoff: Minister, I know you won't have this number with you, but perhaps Commissioner Lucki could provide us with numbers at a later date of how many people working in those first nations communities are in fact indigenous. I know there has been active outreach to try to recruit more indigenous peoples to join the RCMP. I don't expect you to have that number right now.

The second question I have for you is with regard to unfounded cases. We know that The Globe and Mail did an extensive study on that. Halton Region, where I'm from, had one of the highest numbers of unfounded cases in Canada. We are not serving survivors of sexual assault well by using the policies that have been in place. In some cases, it showed an artificially low number of incidents. I know that there has been a lot of work done within your department, and a new uniform crime reporting survey has been brought in. I'm wondering if you could tell us a little about that, Minister, and about how it will improve the service that survivors of sexual assault receive and also change the way that reporting on sexual assaults is done.

Hon. Bill Blair: Thank you very much.

This is a critically important question. No victim of sexual assault should be treated with anything but respect and dignity and compassion. We have seen the impact and the reluctance that many people have of coming forward because they're fearful of how they will be perceived and the experience of the criminal justice system. I can tell you that the RCMP's goal is to strengthen public trust overall in policing, but also to ensure that we encourage and support victims of sexual assault to come forward and report these serious crimes. One of the important parts of preventing them is to make sure that those who engage in such activity are held to account and that we provide good supports for people who have been victimized.

In their December 17 report “The Way Forward: The RCMP's Sexual Assault Review and Victim Support Action Plan”, which the commissioner presented to us, they outlined concrete steps to, first of all, strengthen police training and awareness, enhance victim support—I spoke about that a little earlier—increase their investigative accountability and improve public education and communication.

In my personal experience, I remember that many years ago an absurd number of sexual assaults were deemed to be unfounded, and it was because if there was not substantive evidence that the assault had occurred, police services were determining them to be unfounded. Quite frankly, that's the wrong measure. If there is overwhelming evidence that it did not occur, then it may be unfounded, but in the vast majority of cases, that evidence doesn't exist. It's ab-

solutely critical that victims of sexual assault be treated, as I said, with respect, with compassion, and provided with the supports. Even if they don't want to pursue a criminal investigation, we still have a responsibility to them, to provide support services, to help them recover from the trauma of their victimization.

Ms. Pam Damoff: I think that's it.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Ms. Michaud, you have six minutes.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Hello, Minister. Thank you for being here today.

I see in your speech that \$2 million was allocated to security for the Trans Mountain pipeline. How is that money being used precisely? Is it part of the total envelope spent on Trans Mountain?

[*English*]

Hon. Bill Blair: No, it was a direct response to a request made to us by the City of Burnaby. They anticipated that they may experience extraordinary costs as a result of the TMX terminating in their jurisdiction. They asked for help, and we agreed to provide the help they sought.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: The help for what?

[*Translation*]

There are security issues related to the location of the Trans Mountain expansion project right now.

[*English*]

Hon. Bill Blair: The City of Burnaby specifically identified extraordinary costs that they anticipated they might incur as a result of the need to maintain public safety in their jurisdiction. It was directly related to their concerns with respect to the TMX pipeline terminating within their jurisdiction.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Okay.

Current events bring us to the blockade happening right now. A lot of money is at stake and that money needs to be spent before March 31, so in the next few weeks. In the context of the current crisis, how do we proceed with the funding that is transferred to the RCMP?

[*English*]

Hon. Bill Blair: If we're still referring to the money allocated to the City of Burnaby, my understanding is that this money has already been expended.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: That's for Burnaby.

[*Translation*]

Has the funding that was transferred to the RCMP for the rail blockades stemming from the first nations crisis already been spent?

● (0910)

[English]

Hon. Bill Blair: There is no money in these estimates pertaining to policing activities directly related to what we are experiencing now. When I made reference to the money that went to Burnaby, that was for a specific issue, but the other things are being dealt with within the existing envelope. There are related matters because, for example, the RCMP is committed to maintaining adequate staffing levels and the money that's being invested at Depot, and that's tangentially related to the services that the RCMP is required to provide in their policing contracts, in federal policing and in all of their responsibilities across the world. There is some nexus there, but it's not direct.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Okay.

In another area, how was all the funding allocated for implementing the Cannabis Act and access to cannabis for medical purposes spent? How was this done?

[English]

Hon. Bill Blair: I've actually made reference in my remarks. We've brought forward in legislation a new, expedited pardon process for people who had records for cannabis possession. The additional funding that I referenced earlier was for the Parole Board to administer that program, and that is taking place.

There are other investments that have been made, and I can provide you at another time with the amount of money that was dedicated through Health Canada. That was invested in such things as public education around impaired driving and public education directed at young people in order to reduce the incidence of use among young people.

By the way, the results of that have been quite positive. I would share with you, for example, that Statistics Canada just released data that indicates that prior to the legalization of cannabis, 19.4% of Canadians between the ages of 15 and 17 were using cannabis. Statistics Canada advises that this number is now down to just over 10%, which is nearly a 50% reduction in cannabis use among young people between the ages of 15 and 17. I believe that is directly related to the investment that has been made in public education to help young people know about the health implications of using cannabis at a young age, and it helped them make better decisions.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: The figures on the effects of these transfers have already been published by Statistics Canada. Do you have the figures for access to cannabis for medical purposes?

[English]

Hon. Bill Blair: That is entirely within the portfolio of Health Canada and more appropriately directed towards that ministry.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: You transfer funding to Health Canada, but after that we have no idea how this improves compliance with public safety laws. Is that it?

[English]

Hon. Bill Blair: What we have is funding transferred from the Department of Health to us that enables the RCMP to provide screening services for references and compliance with the regulations.

Under the legislation, the access to cannabis for medicinal purposes regulations, people make application for permits and authorizations for the growing of marijuana and for the dispensing of marijuana. One of the responsibilities of public safety portfolio partners, including the RCMP, is to conduct screening for security purposes as part of that process, so there was a transfer of funds for that.

Essentially, that is the role that Public Safety provides. It is a support to Health Canada and the important work they do in administering that system and maintaining its integrity.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Basically, among the transfers from all the departments, how much came from Public Safety Canada during implementation of this legislation?

[English]

The Chair: That's a fairly complicated question and an important one. Maybe the minister could undertake to get back to us, but we are beyond the six minutes.

Mr. Harris, you have six minutes, please.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to the minister for coming this morning.

I don't notice any additional funds being requested for emergency preparedness, but I do want to ask you, as a follow-up to the disaster relief request from Newfoundland and Labrador after the blizzard, about one item that still remains outstanding. That is the idea of ensuring support for people who lost income for the period when they were legally unable to go to work or even walk on the streets.

All the businesses were closed. Particularly, vulnerable people— young people and those with hourly wages—have no access under the existing program for wage loss.

Could you advise the committee what efforts have been made to find support for that particular problem, which thousands of people have been affected by, particularly a lot of young people who have vulnerable jobs and need that money for essential items such as rent, food and upkeep?

● (0915)

Hon. Bill Blair: Thank you for an important question. We did have the opportunity to communicate and work together on responding to the most recent snowstorm in St. John's, which was very impactful. I was very proud that the federal government was able to work with the provincial government in Newfoundland to provide support services as required, and we responded very quickly.

I am also aware that the Province of Newfoundland will be making an application. They gave notice that they intended to make an application under the DFAA program. That is usually administered as a result of requests through the province to us. We have not yet received that request, but when it comes, it will be processed.

There are things that the federal government, through the DFAA program, which is my area of responsibility, is able to address. There may be other matters where other considerations of other departments may be made, for example, with respect to EI payments—

Mr. Jack Harris: May I cut you off?

Hon. Bill Blair: Of course.

Mr. Jack Harris: You're telling me the things I already know. The things I want to know are about the specific issue of income loss. Have you been making any other efforts to find ways of solving that?

Hon. Bill Blair: We've had discussions with the Province of Newfoundland on their requirements, but they have not specifically identified that as a need for which they are requesting assistance. In any event, it would not be encompassed within—

Mr. Jack Harris: Specifically excluded—

Hon. Bill Blair: It's not encompassed within the program that I'm responsible for administering.

Mr. Jack Harris: So, the answer is that there are no other efforts under way to solve that problem, I guess.

Hon. Bill Blair: Well, let me be very clear. The Province of Newfoundland would initiate those efforts. I don't yet know what stage they are at, but I would not wish to mislead you and suggest that work may not be ongoing. It is work that they would be doing.

Mr. Jack Harris: Okay, well, then I shall ask them whether or not they want that, because I think they have been talking about that for some months now, and you're telling me they're not talking to you about it. That surprises me.

Moving to another point, some questions were asked about the RCMP enforcement on the blockades. I want to ask about the Wet'suwet'en events, not only of this year but specifically last year, when complaints were made about the approach taken by the RCMP—the militarization or apparent militarization of the operation, and other complaints. I understand there is a report, an investigation by the RCMP of that process, that for some reason is taking an awfully long time. Has any report been made to you on the investigation of the complaints that were made—some of them public—about that operation and how it was conducted?

Hon. Bill Blair: First of all—in two parts, if I may—I have been made aware and briefed on the work that has gone on with the RCMP, with the Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs and, more broadly, with that community, working very collaboratively and closely with Premier Horgan's government. That has been taking place over several months. There was a great deal of engagement.

The injunction made by the courts in British Columbia was issued on December 31, and there was an extended period of discussion and negotiation that took place involving the B.C. government, the RCMP and the hereditary chiefs with respect to its enforcement. There were more than 38 days of discussion before the first en-

forcement action was taken. That was resolved peaceably. There were no injuries. My understanding is that the policies, procedures and training of the RCMP were followed in this matter.

I am also aware that there is a complaint being conducted by the independent complaint review body. It has not yet been completed. I would await the results before commenting on it.

Mr. Jack Harris: Do you have any idea as to when that might be forthcoming?

Hon. Bill Blair: That would have to be asked of the independent review commissioner.

Mr. Jack Harris: Speaking of the CRCC, there is a request for additional funding here. One of the outstanding issues is the fact that there are 300 or more cases under way that haven't been dealt with. I'm concerned about that. I guess you must be as well, if we're going to start adding on to the responsibilities of that commission by changing the name and including the Canada Border Services, with another 14,000 employees whose work may be subject to this activity.

Can you see any reason why it is taking so long to do these reports, whether it be this one or the ones that are outstanding now?

• (0920)

The Chair: Again, that is possibly a very important question. Unfortunately, the time has expired.

I caution members that if they are going ask a question towards the end of their time, they should leave time for the minister to respond.

Mr. Morrison.

Mr. Rob Morrison (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Minister.

Article 5 of the RCMP Act gives you the authority to use the RCMP especially during crises and other situations. Does the RCMP have the right to go onto any indigenous territory in Canada?

Hon. Bill Blair: The question is somewhat nuanced. Under the RCMP Act, they are the police of jurisdiction in places where they are governed by the provincial policing agreement that is in place. Like police officers all across the country, they have a responsibility. We talk about rights, but I think it is more appropriate to talk about responsibility. They have a responsibility to provide policing services, to serve and protect the people of their community, and they are guided in that by the law—

Mr. Rob Morrison: Excuse me for just one second—

Hon. Bill Blair: When you talk about the right, the law determines their ability.

Mr. Rob Morrison: My question is more related to whether they have the right to go onto those territories. A simple yes or no would be fine.

Hon. Bill Blair: I think it is more appropriately stated that they have a responsibility to provide policing services throughout all of the places where they are the police of jurisdiction.

Mr. Rob Morrison: Okay, thanks.

I have maybe one more question for the RCMP. This does have to do with budgets because it is all money.

The Chair: That will be a relief for us all.

Mr. Rob Morrison: Maybe the commissioner might want to answer this.

What exactly are the service standards for an RCMP member with regard to an illegal blockade?

Hon. Bill Blair: If I may, Mr. Morrison.... That is an operational question, and because of that, I will defer to the RCMP commissioner to provide a response.

Commissioner Brenda Lucki (Commissioner, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): Good morning, Mr. Chair.

We have a specific policy that we have created for indigenous blockades. Of course, enforcement is the last option. It's about dialogue and trying to find a peaceful resolution to the blockades in the circumstances. It's no different from what's happening currently with the Wet'suwet'en.

Mr. Rob Morrison: Okay, great.

What about with a Supreme Court order?

Commr Brenda Lucki: When there is an injunction, we have the discretion of a couple of things, mostly the timing and the intensity. We can decide when and how we will enforce, even though the injunction is in place. That's the discretion that we've been given.

Hon. Bill Blair: I think it may be of some assistance, so I would direct Mr. Morrison to the RCMP operational manual, chapter 55.2, "Aboriginal Demonstrations or Protests", which sets out the RCMP's policy and procedure. I don't want to take up too much of the committee's time, but I would refer him to that policy. He may find it helpful.

Mr. Rob Morrison: I would like the policy on blockades to be tabled as well, Mr. Chair.

Another question I have is with regard to the CBSA, Minister. Is any of this funding that you're asking for going to be diverted or put into a contract for the CBSA employees? I think it's been a few years since they've had a contract. I know that a lot of people in my area are concerned. I'm just wondering if some funding is anticipated to go towards the employees.

Hon. Bill Blair: Again, a substantial portion of the CBSA's budget, of course, is directed towards salary. However, an issue with respect to salary is an issue with Treasury Board and contract negotiations. I would say that it is not reflected in the estimates that we bring before you today, but is more appropriately a question directed towards the Treasury Board.

Mr. Rob Morrison: Okay.

Let's go back for a bit to Bill C-71, which, of course, could cost a lot of money, depending on the buyback program.

Could you specifically tell me, Minister, what a military-style assault weapon is? Could you define that for me?

• (0925)

Hon. Bill Blair: The reference that we normally imply.... There are weapons that were designed for different things. If we look at the providence of these weapons, there—

Mr. Rob Morrison: Is there a calibre? For example, is a semi-automatic in that classification?

Hon. Bill Blair: It may be, but not necessarily all semi-automatics. Again, I would refer you back to.... When I say "military-designed", I think that's a very important part of this discussion. So, that's weapons that were designed for use by soldiers—not for hunting and not for sporting activity, but for soldiers—to kill enemy combatants. Weapons that were designed for that purpose, I believe, should be used exclusively for that purpose. They have no place in a civil society. We've seen some tragic instances in Canada and also around the world—

Mr. Rob Morrison: Thank you, Minister.

Hon. Bill Blair: —where such weapons have been used because of their efficiency in killing people.

The Chair: I was rather hopeful that we could have some nexus to what the study is, but you've been very disappointing, Mr. Morrison.

Hon. Bill Blair: Not to me, Mr. Chair. I want you to put that on the record.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Iacono.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I also want to thank the minister for being here this morning.

Minister, I often hear my constituents say they are concerned about the threat posed by money laundering. The fact that criminals launder money through illegal means is unacceptable because it increases the cost of living for Canadians. To ensure that those who break the law are identified and receive the appropriate punishment, it is essential to support law enforcement on this.

Unfortunately, we know what the Conservatives did for the 10 years that they were in power. They made cuts to the RCMP, which was not spared.

In budget 2019 and the supplementary estimates, we are investing where it counts.

Minister, can you tell us how we are going to enhance capacity and support our front-line operations?

[*English*]

Hon. Bill Blair: Thank you very much.

First of all, let me say that money laundering is a significant priority for our government, and it's a priority for me. I worked in this area for a very long period of time.

If I may, instead of reflecting back on things that have happened in the past, closing out integrated proceeds of crime units, etc., I'd like to think about how we go forward. I've had a number of discussions with B.C. officials, for example the Attorney General David Eby. Dr. Peter German, who was formerly the commanding officer in British Columbia, has done a very comprehensive report for them and identified some key areas where improvements can be made. We've been working very closely with them.

Let me give you some examples.

Because it is a budget discussion, in budget 2019, we announced \$68.9 million in a program, which involves \$20 million ongoing, to fund the RCMP to strengthen their federal policing capacity, including their capacity to combat money laundering.

We have announced additional money to form an information management and information technology infrastructure and digital tools to provide our law enforcement officials with the resources and access to the technologies they need.

Also, we brought forward measures in the budget implementation act last year—significant and important measures—to reduce the opaque nature of beneficial ownership in federally regulated corporations, for example.

One of the things that organized crime and money launderers hate is sunshine by creating transparency. We also convened a meeting with financial ministers from across the country, because the vast majority, more than 90%, of corporations are regulated by provinces. We're working with all the provinces to bring about a greater transparency to beneficial ownership, which will help those investigations.

Additionally, we also brought forward measures in the budget implementation act to create a new offence of recklessness. We know that police services across the country were having difficulty—and prosecutors particularly were having difficulty—in making the nexus between the proceeds of crime and the predicated offence. We've made those criminals more vulnerable to investigation and prosecution.

There's a great deal more work to do, but we are working with our provincial partners and with our federal authorities through the RCMP's leadership. It's a whole-of-government effort, to make it more difficult for individuals to money launder in this country. Organized crime is entirely motivated by profit. When we take that profit from them, we reduce the impact of organized crime for all Canadians.

Thank you very much. That was an important question.

● (0930)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Thank you, Minister.

My next question is for Commissioner Lucki.

Safety is everyone's business. I know that every party feels that way. The supplementary estimates for 2019-20 provide a transfer of nearly \$789,000 from the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to combat drug-impaired driving.

Can you talk about the spending that will come with that transfer and how that spending will help in better protecting Canadians and combatting drug-impaired driving?

[*English*]

Hon. Bill Blair: I know you directed the question to the commissioner, but if I may, I'd like an opportunity to speak to this.

We saw, for example, that there were significant deficiencies in the law with respect to drug-impaired driving. It's been an offence to drive while impaired by drugs in this country since 1923. Up until the introduction and implementation of Bill C-46 in the last Parliament, the police did not have the authorities or access to the technologies or the training they needed to enforce these laws, and to therefore deter and detect these offences and successfully prosecute them.

We've made very significant investments in a number of areas, specifically for the police. We've provided additional resources, not just for the RCMP but for police right across the country, to increase the number of officers. We've nearly doubled the number of officers trained as drug recognition experts, who are necessary in the investigation and prosecution of these offences. We have additionally made significant investments in police officers in every part of the country. They have been trained in what's called “standardized field sobriety testing” so that every police officer is empowered to do this.

The Chair: Mr. Blair, we're going to have to leave the answer there, unfortunately.

I'm sure you'll be able to come back to that, Mr. Iacono.

Mr. Shipley, you have five minutes, please.

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Blair, for being here today.

We had a set of questions ready to go yesterday, but I had an email this morning that I read on my computer before I walked over here, so I'm going to change it up.

A constituent asked me a question that I didn't know the answer to, and this was quite an interesting question. Obviously, we're all here today to make sure you have the proper resources to ensure national security. The constituent asked if I knew the definition of “terrorist activity” according to the Criminal Code.

Are you aware of what that is, Mr. Blair?

The Chair: I'm going to let the minister answer the question, but does this have some relation to the—

Mr. Doug Shipley: Yes. They want to make sure they have enough money to enforce that statute. I have it right here so I can read it for you.

The Chair: Okay. Maybe help out the minister then. It's good.

Mr. Doug Shipley: Sure.

(b) an act or omission, in or outside Canada,

(i) that is committed

(A) in whole or in part for a political, religious or ideological purpose, objective or cause, and

(B) in whole or in part with the intention of intimidating the public, or a segment of the public, with regard to its security, including its economic security, or compelling a person, a government or a domestic or an international organization to do or to refrain from doing any act, whether the public or the person, government or organization is inside or outside Canada

That's the definition. This resident wanted to know if the current illegal blockades that have been happening across Canada are being deemed a terrorist activity.

Hon. Bill Blair: No, they are not.

Mr. Doug Shipley: What would they fall under? Why would they not have the intention of intimidating the public or segment of the public with regard to its security?

They wanted to know that. When I looked it up myself, I was curious.

Hon. Bill Blair: It's one of the challenges of people who read legislation. It's how the law is applied and defined by our courts and by the police.

The important work of protecting Canada, the work we do globally and domestically in dealing with terrorist activity, is critically important, but as well in this country, there is a protected right in the Constitution for lawful, peaceful protest. When that protest becomes unlawful, as can be the case either in violation of an injunction or as a result of specific criminal activity, our officials don't make the immediate nexus to terrorism in criminal activity.

Our officials are well versed in their responsibilities, and the determination as to what conduct might constitute a specific criminal offence is not something that I as a minister of government would direct. That's a determination made under the individual discretion of the police of jurisdiction in exercising their responsibilities to conduct investigation and the responsibilities of prosecutors of jurisdiction.

I would not leap to that determination but leave it to the police and to our prosecutors to determine whether or not any conduct meets a threshold of that level of criminality.

• (0935)

Mr. Doug Shipley: I definitely agree with proper civil demonstrations. I'm all for that. But when we're seeing certain things like I saw yesterday with burning goods on rail lines across Canada, I thought that may have crossed the line. Exactly where are we determining what's crossing the line then, Minister?

Hon. Bill Blair: Again, I have to be a little careful. I was asked this question yesterday, Mr. Shipley. As the minister, I do have a responsibility to leave it to the police of jurisdiction and the exercise of their discretion to determine and investigate criminal activity, so I avoid pronouncements in defining that activity in respect to the Criminal Code. I think it's very appropriate that I be careful in doing that, because I do not want to interfere with the operational independence of both the police and our prosecutors. At the same

time, that was terribly unsafe, deeply concerning. I have confidence in the police to deal with it appropriately.

Mr. Doug Shipley: I agree.

I will give my last minute to Mr. Paul-Hus.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you, Mr. Shipley.

Minister, on Tuesday, the correctional investigator was unequivocal with the committee. He took the time to tell us that he believes that the internal investigation commissioned by the government was ineffective and inadequate and that an external investigation in the death of Marylène Levesque was needed.

Why are you refusing to launch an external investigation?

[*English*]

Hon. Bill Blair: I think we both very sincerely agree that this is a terrible tragedy and should not have occurred. I think a number of different responsibilities are important to acknowledge and recognize.

First of all, a criminal investigation is the responsibility of the police of jurisdiction. In Quebec, that is the police in Quebec. I understand that individual is being charged.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: I am not talking about the police. I am talking about an internal investigation into correctional services, the Parole Board of Canada.

We want to know what happened. The government commissioned an internal investigation, but the correctional officer made a point of saying—he is the one who raised the issue—that there needed to be an external investigation conducted by a retired judge.

[*English*]

The Chair: The time has expired, but there is going to be an opportunity for this committee to explore those questions. In the week we're back, we are set up to do that.

I apologize, Ms. Khera, for missing the order, but you have five minutes, please. Thank you.

Ms. Kamal Khera (Brampton West, Lib.): Thank you, Chair. It's okay.

Minister Blair, welcome to the committee. Thank you for being here and for all that you do in keeping our communities safe.

Minister, I know that as a GTA member of Parliament and a former Toronto police chief, you are very familiar with the region of Peel. In their 2018 annual report, Peel police stated that gun violence has been a major problem for the region. In 2018, the police seized 459 firearms and investigated 504 potential shootings, an increase of 18% over 2017.

Minister, as the member of Parliament for Brampton West, I've personally met families and have read stories of the tragic end path of gun and gang violence in our communities. I know there's no one simple solution. We need a comprehensive and holistic approach, and I know our government has made significant investments to combat gun and gang violence specifically in the GTA.

Can you elaborate on those investments and the impact in our communities? This is for the sake of my constituents who constantly ask me how the federal investments that we make flow into our municipalities, into our regions and into our communities like Brampton.

Hon. Bill Blair: I'll try to be very quick, Mr. Chair.

First of all, in 2017, we committed \$327 million to provide funding to police services right across the country. That includes the RCMP, CBSA, and also municipal and indigenous police services across the country. Of that, \$214 million was specifically allocated to municipalities. I can speak to the federal dollars, and that might be even more appropriate, Mr. Chair, because we did make investments in the RCMP to increase their capacity to conduct investigations in their jurisdictions of responsibility, because organized crime investigations into the gangs responsible for smuggling, stealing or diverting these guns are an important part of their work.

Under the agreement, we have tried to work with the provinces across the country to provide that funding. We do that by providing, for example, \$65 million to the Province of Ontario. It is then Ontario's responsibility to determine how best to allocate that within their jurisdiction. As we know, there were some difficulties in getting that flowing efficiently. The money was made available to the province, but getting it out....

I was very pleased to meet with the Ontario ministers in Brampton in front of the Peel Regional Police headquarters in your area, where we announced the additional \$54 million that they agreed to accept. They announced at that time 17 different projects they're investing in. That money is now beginning to flow.

It's important to support the police, but it's important to do more. We've listened very carefully to communities, and we have in our platform.... I don't want to get ahead of the budget, but it is our intention to make significant new investments in communities and in kids, because we've also heard that it's not just an issue of policing, but you have to address the social conditions that give rise to this violence.

We'll be making significant investments, and we intend to work more closely and directly with communities and municipalities to make this money flow, not just more quickly but more effectively, to get it where it will have the best account. I also think we have a responsibility to produce good public value for these investments for Canadians, and we need to be able to demonstrate the return on that investment. The best way to do that is to deal more directly with the organizations responsible for making those investments.

Of course, that's not all we're doing. We've also heard the importance of interdicting the supply of guns that are coming into our community, so we'll be making efforts to strengthen gun control laws to keep guns from being stolen by requiring stricter storage measures to keep them from being diverted and by providing the police with authorities and resources to detect and therefore prosecute such offences. Also, we've made, and continue to make, very significant investments at the border in CBSA officials and also in technologies and in our investigations to deal with those organizations and individuals responsible for smuggling guns into the country.

We are doing work to interdict the supply of guns, but also doing work to reduce the demand for guns. All of those investments are important and necessary.

● (0940)

Ms. Kamal Khera: Minister, my second question is about cybersecurity. We know that more Canadians are relying on information technology, which has made us more connected than ever before, but that also poses the question of vulnerabilities for hackers to exploit. We know that cybercrime has grown by more than 100% between 2014 and 2018, according to StatsCan.

In Brampton, my colleagues and I worked very closely with Ryerson University to fund the Cybersecure Catalyst, which is a national centre for cybersecurity in Brampton.

Minister, can you tell me exactly how our government is fighting cybercrime and keeping Canadians safe? Thank you.

The Chair: You have 10 seconds.

Hon. Bill Blair: We're investing \$201 million to bolster Canada's ability to fight cybercrime. We're creating an RCMP national cybercrime coordination unit. Perhaps in the next session the commissioner will be able to provide you with more details.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Ms. Khera.

Madame Michaud, the final two and a half minutes go to you.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like us to talk about the Parole Board of Canada.

As you know, according to a poll conducted in 2019 by the board itself, 70% of its parole officers said they were unable to do their job well and therefore protect the public, when that is the mandate of Public Safety Canada.

What has been done to rectify the situation? Has more money been injected? We see that the projected spending between 2020 and 2022 is less than the money allocated in 2019-20.

Is that realistic?

[*English*]

Hon. Bill Blair: Thank you for that.

I would make one statement, and then I'll turn it over to Ms. Oades if she wants to add any additional things.

First of all, the parole system is very important. We know that the outcomes for offenders who are released under supervision as a result of the work done by the Parole Board actually produce much bigger outcomes, as opposed to individuals who are released at end of sentence, who have not had the benefit of the thoughtful interventions of the Parole Board and the support that is provided to individuals through the Parole Board and corrections offices. We recognize the importance of that work and making sure that it's adequately resourced.

Perhaps I will turn to the chair, Ms. Oades.

Ms. Jennifer Oades (Chairperson, Parole Board of Canada): Yes. Thank you.

I'm not sure if you're confusing the Parole Board with parole officers and the investment in the community, because I'm not aware of—

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: I am talking about the poll conducted of the officers who indicated they were unable to do their job properly. I don't know if that is linked to cuts made in the past.

[*English*]

Ms. Jennifer Oades: Yes. I'll be clear that the Parole Board is a decision-making body. We don't supervise parole officers. The parole officers come under the supervision of the Correctional Service of Canada.

• (0945)

Hon. Bill Blair: Those parole officers are under the responsibility of Commissioner Kelly.

Commissioner, briefly, would you like to make an intervention?

The Chair: Sorry. I'm sure you'll be able to work a response into that question at some point.

That brings us to the end of our time with the minister. I'm going to suspend for a minute or two while the minister and his staff leave. Then we will continue with the officials.

With that, we're suspended. Thank you, Minister.

• (0945)

(Pause)

• (0950)

The Chair: I realize that I started to throw the cat in with the pigeons earlier today. I make no apology for that because at the end of this session it was my intention to ask members to vote on the supplementary estimates (B).

Based upon the information that is in the public realm, and even with the minister's tangential explanation on some elements, there won't be a member at this table who will actually be able to explain his or her vote.

I want guidance from members as to whether they would appreciate, on a vote-by-vote basis, an explanation of the difference between what's in the table of expenditures and the actual vote that's being requested. Would that be helpful? Is that useful, or do we simply proceed in the normal fashion and start with questions?

Jack.

Mr. Jack Harris: Mr. Chair, I am supportive of your concerns about the information available to us. We have a lot of people here and we have a job that seems almost impossible, frankly, to deal with in an hour with these questions that are essentially unanswered. If we're going to do that, we're not going to have an opportunity to ask further questions.

I, for one, am not prepared to vote on this at the end of this meeting, based on the lack of information. If we have an opportunity to ask questions, we'll do that. If the information is inadequate, then I think those responsible for presenting this information ought to do a better job, and we'll come back and vote on it another time. I'm not prepared to vote "yea" or "nay" on these estimates today, as a result of the lack of information.

The Chair: You realize that they'll be deemed voted on anyway. Having said that, this will keep coming up. There will be supplementary estimates (C) after this. Then there will be main estimates. Then we'll go back to (A), (B) and (C) again. I take the view that the reconciliation of the two numbers is important, so that we all know what we're voting on.

With that, is it the will of the committee to proceed in the normal fashion?

I'd call upon Mr. Paul-Hus. Just let me get a sense of the—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Chair, I missed the first part of your question. You want us to vote immediately? What is the question?

[*English*]

The Chair: No. From the officials, insofar as they are able to do so, I want a reconciliation between the vote number and the table of expenditures number.

I know you've spent hours looking at this, Mr. Paul-Hus, but the table of expenditures number, for instance, on the Canada Border Services Agency is \$3.4 million. The vote number, however, is \$971,000. There is an explanation. Do you want that explanation?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: In part, yes. However, there are technical questions on the budgets for operations.

The minister talked about \$500,000 for the CBSA, but on the other hand, there is an increase of \$500 million and more. If the witnesses could speak to that, that would be good, because the minister had no idea what he was talking about.

[*English*]

The Chair: Is there any other commentary?

Mr. Dalton.

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): My first question is for the RCMP commissioner. We're facing a real crisis here with the blockades. There's a great impact on our economy. Thousands of people are again laid off. I talked to somebody yesterday who had been laid off in my own community of Maple Ridge. They had to lay off a number of people. Commuters are being impacted. I wonder if you could comment on a police force that seems to be unable, or unwilling, to apply the rule of law across Canada.

Commr Brenda Lucki: Thank you for that question.

In our jurisdiction, we are applying the law. We had an injunction in mid-February for the Morice forestry service road in the Wet'suwet'en territory. We had discussions and eventually we enforced the injunction. For us, the discussions are not about whether we are going to enforce an injunction, but about how and when we're going to enforce it so that we can get the most peaceful outcome. That's exactly what happened. We were very patient. It took several days, and we cleared the forestry road as per the Supreme Court injunction in B.C.

• (0955)

Mr. Marc Dalton: Thank you, Commissioner.

It seems that when we get one blockade cleared, there are others popping up all over the place. It just seems like we're doing whack-a-mole. I think Canadians are totally frustrated. They've had it. Canadians want some definite action.

It seems that this isn't happening with RCMP. I would like to know if this is a decision that is being made totally independently of the Minister of Public Safety or if this is strictly a decision of the RCMP.

I would also like to know how this is impacting police morale.

Commr Brenda Lucki: In our jurisdictions, we have been enforcing all of our injunctions in all of the blockades. I cannot speak specifically to other places of jurisdiction. Currently we have no blockades up in our RCMP jurisdictions. This is having a huge effect not only on the economy and on Canadians; it is having an effect on reconciliation, most definitely.

As for our officers, they know what kind of job they're asked to do. With the right support and the right equipment, they do that job, so the morale is good.

Mr. Marc Dalton: Thank you, Commissioner.

I'll turn to the SNC-Lavalin situation. Is the investigation continuing into the potential political interference of the Prime Minister and members of his team and cabinet in the SNC-Lavalin prosecution? Or has that been suspended since you've been unable to access information due to cabinet confidentiality?

The Chair: Let me say that we are straying into the realm of political questions. The minister was here to answer political questions. The officials are here to answer questions pertaining to the estimates.

I'm losing my sense of humour. If you could ask questions pertaining to the estimates, particularly on how we're going to reconcile the votes with the expenditures table, that would be useful.

Asking officials to answer quasi-political questions is not appropriate.

Mr. Marc Dalton: Mr. Chair, I don't necessarily agree that it is a political question. I believe this falls fully under the jurisdiction of the RCMP.

The Chair: The chair does consider it a political question. You're more than welcome to continue with your questions, but I'm asking for relevance.

Mr. Marc Dalton: If you can let us know, is the investigation continuing at this point?

Commr Brenda Lucki: As police agencies, we never speak about whether or not we are investigating something. It's only after it comes into the public realm of charges that we are able to disclose that information. We never disclose whether or not we are in the midst of an investigation.

Mr. Marc Dalton: Thank you, Commissioner.

My last question has to do with border security and the coronavirus, which is spreading throughout the world. What are the specific measures that have been taken in the past few weeks since the coronavirus outbreak to protect the border agents of Canada who may be exposed to the disease?

Mr. John Ossowski: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm happy to answer that question.

Officers are trained to screen for all types of diseases all the time, whether that is measles or coronavirus. Anybody who is feeling ill when presenting at a port of entry is dealt with appropriately.

With respect to the coronavirus, we've been taking advice from the Public Health Agency of Canada on how to manage the situation. So far, that is being done very well.

Mr. Marc Dalton: What specific measures are being taken to also protect travellers at the border and airports in case of a pandemic? Well, it's not "in case of"—it's actually happening. Even in Italy and other places, there are cities that are being quarantined.

Mr. John Ossowski: There are many different measures.

Once again, based on the scientific advice from the Public Health Agency of Canada, we have an enhanced screening question on the machines when you come into the country. Depending on your answer in terms of where your travel has been—whether you are coming from China, particularly Wuhan or Hubei—there would be a subsequent interaction with us.

Advice is given. You're presented to a PHAC officer for an assessment. You're given a mask and a kit to make sure that if you do develop symptoms afterwards you will know what to do to make sure you're isolating yourself properly and protecting against further infection. It's a very robust process that we've put in place.

• (1000)

Mr. Marc Dalton: Do we have all the necessary equipment—the masks, the temperature gauges, everything—at the necessary border crossings?

Mr. John Ossowski: Yes, absolutely.

Mr. Marc Dalton: Okay.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dalton.

Mr. Iacono, you have six minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Ossowski, supplementary estimates (B), 2019-20 provides a transfer of some \$2.1 million from the Department of Citizenship and Immigration to the Canada Border Services Agency, the CBSA, for the Air Carrier Support Centre, which plays an important intermediary role between commercial airlines and the CBSA when it comes to passenger information.

Can you explain what this transfer of funding will be used for? Do you have an example of the mission the centre might undertake thanks to this funding?

[*English*]

Mr. John Ossowski: Thank you for the question.

The \$2.1 million is a transfer from the Department of Citizenship and Immigration to share the cost for the air carrier support centre. This centre is staffed by border service officers who take calls from airlines when there's a question with respect to an electronic travel authorization or some other documentation or identity issue. We resolve that over the phone with the airline to make sure either that the passenger can continue, or that further work is being done to resolve the matter.

This is a shared-cost operation that we have, which was put in place when the electronic travel authorization program was started.

Was it three years ago?

Deputy Commissioner Brian Brennan (Deputy Commissioner, Contract and Indigenous Policing, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): Yes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Angelo Iacono: My question is for the commissioner. The minister answered it earlier, but could you add a few words to what he said about how this transfer will be used to combat drug-impaired driving?

[*English*]

Commr Brenda Lucki: Yes. Thank you for the question.

Much of the money that we received was not only to train RCMP members, but to train the trainers.

We also provide support for all police agencies. It's a very specific type of training for drug recognition experts. To have that training, we try to train more officers so that they would be able to detect drugs. A lot of the money was spent on that. Then we got into drug instruments that can detect a yes or a no. Money was spent on that as well.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Thank you.

I will give the remainder of my time to Ms. Khera.

[*English*]

The Chair: Ms. Khera.

Ms. Kamal Khera: Thank you.

I want to go back to my earlier question on cybersecurity and cybercrime.

We know that cybercrime grew by more than 100% between 2014 to 2018, according to StatsCan. Can you elaborate a bit on what our government is doing or what investments we're making to fight cybercrime and keep Canadians safe?

Commr Brenda Lucki: Absolutely, thank you for that question.

As part of the strategy, there is approximately \$201 million over five years and \$43 million per year ongoing to bolster our ability to fight cybercrime. This includes the support of the creation of the RCMP national cybercrime coordination centre, which we refer to as NC3.

The mandate of NC3 is to coordinate Canadian cybercrime investigations and collaborate with international partners. It's also to provide digital investigative advice and guidance to Canadian police across the entire country, produce actionable cybercrime intelligence for Canadian police and establish a national public mechanism for Canadians and businesses to report cybercrime to police.

We established two additional cybercrime investigative teams, in Milton and in Montreal. In addition, there has been additional funding of \$78.98 million over five years for the enforcement of cybercrime from the RCMP.

Ms. Kamal Khera: You talked about the RCMP coordination centre. Where will that be located? Is it in Ottawa?

Commr Brenda Lucki: I can't tell you, sorry.

No, I'm just kidding. Of course I can. It's in Ottawa.

Voices: Oh, oh!

• (1005)

Ms. Kamal Khera: My next question is for Corrections Canada.

Earlier this week we had Dr. Zinger, who came in to speak to his annual report. I want to talk about his recommendation number 10. It says that, in consultation with the Canadian Human Rights Commission, CSC should review staffing to better reflect “the diversity of the offender population”. It also says, “CSC should examine complaints against staff on prohibited grounds of discrimination” and develop an action plan “to address gaps”.

Can you comment on what CSC is doing to do just that?

Ms. Anne Kelly (Commissioner, Correctional Service of Canada): Certainly, we keep stats, complaints and grievances from offenders around those issues, and we follow up on them.

I don't know what in particular the OCI was referring to.

Ms. Kamal Khera: It was about the staffing. Staffing should better reflect the diversity of the offender population, because there were, I believe.... I don't have the notes on me. For black inmates, the complaints were much higher than for some of the other inmates.

Ms. Anne Kelly: We're working hard at this because, as you know, both indigenous offenders and black offenders are represented in our institutions. As you know, indigenous offenders now have reached 30%. In terms of black offenders, it's 8%, as opposed to 4% in the Canadian population. For indigenous offenders, in terms of recruitment, we're going to the indigenous communities, speaking with them and changing the way we receive applications, because often they may not use technology. It's the same for recruiting black personnel as well. We're working hard at that.

The Chair: We're going to have to leave the answer there. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Michaud, you have six minutes.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to come back to the Parole Board of Canada because I didn't really get an answer earlier. Perhaps Ms. Lapointe could answer my question.

According to the poll that was conducted, 70% of parole officers say that they are unable to do their job properly.

What has been done about this? Will extra funding be added to ensure training and coordination for these officers?

Ms. Anne Kelly: I can answer that.

There are two types of parole officers: those working in institutions and those in the community.

This is how things work in institutions. The ratio is one officer for every 25 offenders in minimum security institutions, one for every 28 in medium security institutions, and one for every 30 in maximum security institutions.

For community parole officers, we use a resource allocation formula. This formula calculates the time these officers need to do their job, that is to draft reports, supervise offenders in the community—there are different models of supervision—and to travel to carry out this supervision. This tells us how many resources are required in the community. We work with our union partners and review the formula annually.

We want to establish a similar formula for parole officers working in institutions. We conducted a survey in collaboration with Statistics Canada. We are working on creating a formula that is similar to the one used for community officers.

As for training, parole officers have initial training of four and a half weeks. After that, all parole officers receive one week of training a year.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Do you plan on increasing this? I am under the impression that, in the case of Ms. Levesque's murder, there was a lack of community supervision for people on day parole.

Will more investments be made in this area?

Ms. Anne Kelly: We hope that will be the case. As you know, a joint committee was established to conduct an investigation. It will examine all the circumstances of this case and determine if policies were followed. There is the law, but also training. If more training was required, we will consider providing it.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Do you think this came about because of a lack of funds?

• (1010)

Ms. Anne Kelly: I would not say that. It is based on a resource allocation formula, which is reviewed every year together with our union partners.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: All right.

I will come back to what a witness told us last Tuesday. Several recommendations were made with respect to the Correctional Service of Canada. This witness talked about a fairly toxic climate and said that there were funds for this file, but that the priorities were not the right ones.

Could you tell me more about this?

Ms. Anne Kelly: I can categorically state that having a healthy and respectful culture and environment where there is no harassment is one of my personal priorities as the Commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada. I will also tell you that a great deal of work has been done in that regard, and I can give you many examples.

The Auditor General made recommendations. We now have a comprehensive national strategy, which will be finalized by the end of March. We also conduct a respect campaign divided into themes, during which our managers receive training on how to have difficult conversations with employees.

We presented our first report on the work climate and employee well-being to establish a point of reference. We intend to present these reports annually. We set up discussion groups across the country, precisely to speak to employees. Personally, I have chaired two of these groups. A great deal of work was accomplished.

The national chairperson of our citizen advisory committees told me just two weeks ago that she had noticed a change in the service's culture. That said, it is a large organization with 18,000 employees. It takes time.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: In concrete terms, you believe that public awareness and prevention campaigns and perhaps more training could change the current climate. We can therefore hope that the next Auditor General's report will attest to these results.

Ms. Anne Kelly: I hope so.

Our external partners are telling us that they have noticed changes. We are working very hard on this issue because our staff does the work. They must have a healthy and respectful environment.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Michaud.

[English]

Mr. Harris, you have six minutes, please.

Mr. Jack Harris: Thank you, Chair.

Commissioner Kelly, I was listening to your comments, and also looking at the Auditor General's report. The Auditor General does not describe a respectful, healthy climate at Corrections Canada.

You may be making changes now, but the fact of the matter is that, in the Auditor General's report, nearly half of the employees stated that they felt they would fear reprisals if they made a complaint of harassment, discrimination or violence from another employee or from management. Half of the employees felt that there would be reprisals for doing that. As well, 60% said they had serious concerns about civility and respect in the workplace, and 67% felt that the organizational culture was a serious or significant concern.

That doesn't describe to me a healthy, respectful workplace for employees. This is not new. This has been reported for several years in a row. I really wonder how this is going to be fixed between now and March. That sounds very optimistic. Do you have enough money to do that?

You say you don't need any more resources for the parole service, yet the Office of the Correctional Investigator just told us last week that there was a 1:1 ratio of employees to offenders in the prison service, and on the parole side, a ratio of 1:6.5, or thereabouts. He felt that there were insufficient resources for parole.

Could you try to square some of these circles? I'm confused about how this healthy and respectful workplace has these kinds of problems described by the Auditor General.

• (1015)

Ms. Anne Kelly: I would start by saying that correctional work is challenging. We work in a complex environment with a sometimes difficult population. When people visit our institutions, they feel that the staff are dedicated; they're passionate, and their hearts are into the work they do.

Mr. Jack Harris: Madam Commissioner, I'm sorry to interrupt. It's a tough job, and I think we all accept that. What we're talking about here is workers and workers, and workers and management, the culture of the workplace.

There's an assurance that the department has a workplace free from bullying, harassment and sexual violence. My staff were talking about that. That's what I'd like you to focus on, if you might.

Ms. Anne Kelly: Okay. What I will say is that, in his news release of February 18, the OCI himself acknowledged and was encouraged by the efforts under way across the service to create a more respectful and healthy workplace. This is what we're working really hard at doing.

In the latest public service employee survey, which was in 2019, the one thing I wanted to see was increased participation from staff in terms of responding to the survey. We saw that in the department. We also saw improvements, albeit small improvements. We saw a decrease of 6% in respondents indicating they had been harassed; an increase of 7% in respondents indicating their satisfaction with the quality of supervision they received; an increase of 3% in respondents who feel they can initiate a formal recourse process without fear of reprisal. As I said, we've put in place a number of initiatives to ensure that we have a safe and respectful workplace.

I mentioned the end of March. That was in terms of what the OAG recommended, which is a national comprehensive strategy for workplace wellness and employee well-being. The OAG recognized that CSC had undertaken many activities, but we didn't have an overall, overarching strategy. That's what we've been working on.

Mr. Jack Harris: I'd say that an improvement of 6% in terms of lack of concern about reprisals would still leave you with 40% who are concerned.

Bear with me for a moment. If you've declared to this committee today that you already have a respectful, healthy culture at Correctional Service Canada, then that seems to contradict the needs that have been described and the fact that you need to have a comprehensive strategy to deal with that. You're not there yet, are you?

Ms. Anne Kelly: No, we're not there yet. What I'm saying is that for me it's a priority that we have a safe, healthy, respectful workplace. We have the report of the OAG, and the OCI has said some things. That's why we put in place a number of initiatives where we hope we'll see improvements in terms of a safe, healthy, respectful workplace at CSC. But yes, there is more work to be done.

Mr. Jack Harris: Well, I hope that happens. One of the concerns was that there was a lack of will to actually do it. This has been an ongoing situation.

Mr. Chair, I don't know how much time I have left.

The Chair: You have 15 seconds. You could donate them to Mr. Paul-Hus.

Mr. Jack Harris: I can't do very much with 15 seconds, so I won't even try.

The Chair: Oh, I have absolute faith in your ability to do something with 15 seconds, Mr. Harris, but thank you for that.

Monsieur Paul-Hus, I'll be interested in your questions relevant to this issue.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Kelly, they say that there is enough money in the budgets. Only 6% of the funds are for resources on the ground. I would like to know why the number of people paroled has increased in Canada when there are not enough resources on the ground to provide adequate supervision.

A case like that of Eustachio Gallese, who killed Ms. Levesque, should never happen, and everyone knows that. Inmates are nevertheless being released. It would seem that we are in a hurry to parole offenders even though the resources are not available.

Tell me why, Ms. Kelly. Why must we release people from prison when we do not have the resources to supervise them?

Ms. Anne Kelly: I would first like to extend my sincere condolences to the family and friends of Marylène Levesque. It is a tragedy. That is never the result we want. The mandate of the Correctional Service of Canada is to ensure public safety. We take that very seriously.

We are not in a hurry to release offenders into the community. They have to wait for their eligibility date. They also have to follow their correctional plan. There are things they must do in order to be able to appear before the board and then the board decides whether or not they will be granted parole.

• (1020)

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Ms. Kelly, if there are no resources, can we not say that they must wait? There is no obligation to release them. If supervision is not in place to provide follow up, why must people be released? Is there pressure to do so?

Ms. Anne Kelly: No, the offenders must be ready. Our mandate is to prepare offenders.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: I understand.

Ms. Anne Kelly: We do so through our interventions and programs, once they are ready. We often also provide them with opportunities to leave the institution by granting escorted temporary absences.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: What happens if the offender is ready to be released and meets all the assessment criteria you have put in place, but there are not enough officers to supervise them on the ground? There is no obligation to release him, especially in the case of a murderer like Eustachio Gallese.

Ms. Anne Kelly: As I explained, we work very closely with our union partners. We have a resource allocation formula for community parole officers. It takes into account different things, such as the reports to be drafted and the different types of supervision they are responsible for. This tells us how many officers we need in the community.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you, Ms. Kelly.

My next question is for the people from the Canada Border Services Agency.

The budget has increased by \$500 million or more. Will these funds be used deal with the backlog of 50,000 removals? These are people who came to Canada and were denied asylum, among other

things. It is the job of the CBSA to remove them, but it is unable to do so.

Will this money help the CBSA do that?

[*English*]

Mr. John Ossowski: As I said earlier, I think the big difference that you're referring to is a result of previous estimates provided by the government. Last year, with respect to removals in particular, there was money for a border enforcement strategy for us to deal with increases in refugee claimants and to make sure, once they have gone through all of their processes and have exhausted all other avenues of appeal and are ready for removal, that we will remove them.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Will the money that is going to be voted help the agency carry out the removals and ensure that you will have more resources?

The current estimate is that just 1,000 of 50,000 have been removed.

[*English*]

Mr. John Ossowski: Yes. Just to be clear, we're not asking for any money in these supplementary estimates (B) for border enforcement functions to deal with removals. That was previously provided, in estimates from last year's budget.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you, Mr. Ossowski.

My next question is for the representatives of Public Safety Canada.

I would like to speak about two existing programs: the First Nations Organized Crime Initiative, whose results were set out in a report last year, and the Kahnawake Organized Crime Initiative, for which a report is being prepared.

The 34-page report on Akwesasne indicates that AK-47 assault rifles were seized. Quebec's premier mentioned that AK-47s might be found in Kahnawake. That is not news.

Is this plausible?

[*English*]

The Chair: Can you be very brief in your comment? Mr. Paul-Hus is out of time.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monik Beauregard (Associate Deputy Minister , Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness): That is detailed information provided by the police. I will have to send you the specific information from the Department of Public Safety.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Therefore, the information is available and you can provide it to the committee. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Lightbound, you have five minutes.

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My first question concerns the National Parole Board.

Ms. Oades, you talked about the \$1.7 million in the budget, including \$1.3 million to expedite the granting of pardons to those found guilty of simple possession of cannabis.

How do you think that this money will improve the process? What is your assessment of the process to date? The minister mentioned processing times of seven days, which is already very good.

• (1025)

[English]

Ms. Jennifer Oades: We have implemented an expedited process for pardons. We have received 381 applications so far since the law passed. We have accepted 215 of those applications. We've returned 160 applications as they were either ineligible or incomplete. Of the ones we've accepted, we have ordered 213 cannabis record suspensions, and there are six applications pending processing. Processing takes a week, so this is quite up to date.

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Lightbound: Okay. What will the supplementary amounts be used for?

[English]

Ms. Jennifer Oades: It's to cover costs from the front end: training of staff, developing a new application form because it's a totally new expedited way, looking at running everything through plain language editors, and all of the outreach and working with our partners in terms of letting them know how to help people apply. All of it has a cost, and this is for that cost.

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Lightbound: Thank you very much. That answers my question.

Thank you also for the statistics. That was very interesting.

I now want to ask Mr. Moor of the Canada Border Services Agency about the Passenger Protect Program.

We know that in the past, there have been issues with this program. People were not allowed to board a plane if their name was similar to that of a person on the no fly list.

In the estimates presented, there is a \$900,000 transfer to Transport Canada for the establishment of a centralized program under the Passenger Protect Program.

Mr. Moor, could you elaborate a little on how this money will be used to enhance the program?

Mr. Jonathan Moor (Vice-President and Chief Financial Officer, Finance and Corporate Management Branch, Canada Border Services Agency): Thank you for your question.

[English]

I might pass it over to Public Safety, which owns the policy around the passenger protect program, but this transfer relates to

the setting up of the call centre, which will deal with airlines when they have hits on the database.

It was given to us in the Treasury Board submission, and we are now passing it over to Transport Canada, which will be setting up the actual centre.

[Translation]

Ms. Monik Beauregard: I would like to add that we are working on the implementation of a new and enhanced passenger protect program with Public Safety Canada, Transport Canada and the CB-SA. This could make travel easier for certain passengers with names similar to those of people on the no fly list.

This will be a partnership. Funds will be allocated for the implementation of information systems so that Transport Canada can establish an operations centre and Public Safety Canada can implement a mechanism that will assign a number to travellers who submit an application.

Mr. Joël Lightbound: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Those were my only two questions. I know that my colleague, Ms. Damoff, also has some questions.

[English]

Ms. Pam Damoff: I don't think I have time, do I?

The Chair: No. You have about 20 seconds. Thank you.

Mr. Morrison, you have five minutes.

Mr. Rob Morrison: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have a question for the RCMP, of course, not that it's any surprise. This is probably for the deputy commissioner as well.

I'm really happy to hear that you're putting \$25 million into contract policing and \$27 million into increasing Depot to 40 troops. What is the vacancy rate right now, the percentage, say in Alberta or Saskatchewan? I'm really interested in the rural policing side of this, and that's where I'm going to get to with my question.

• (1030)

Commr Brenda Lucki: Absolutely. What I can say is that funding... We've never been funded fully in our budget to be at 40 troops. It's always been at about 18, so every year we need a top-up to get to 40.

Regarding your question on vacancy rates, we have had an unprecedented lower vacancy rate, which we've worked hard on, because we can't control soft vacancies, as we call them. Last year, we ran at 1.5%. What I'm talking about is across Canada; I can't specifically speak to Alberta, but across Canada we went to 1.5%.

Mr. Rob Morrison: Okay. The concerns I've heard are from Saskatchewan and some of the rural areas. Some of the concerns are about your amalgamation or closing of detachments and hubbing, where the last person left in the community is usually the RCMP officer.

I'm wondering, too.... It seems that a lot of the people being hired are being hired based on priorities in Ottawa. Maybe consideration should be given, especially when spending this kind of money—I'm keeping it financial here—to allowing the provinces to hire based on their priorities. That way, you'll hire individuals who want to reside in rural communities, whereas a lot of people aren't familiar with that.

Commr Brenda Lucki: The way we process resources is that, absolutely, it's the province that decides how many resources they can afford. It's not Ottawa-centric, by any means. When a province can afford certain amounts of additional resources, it will make that request to Ottawa and we will fill that.

In regard to changing some of the service delivery models, it's not a cost-saving measure in many cases; it's to increase the service delivery in some of those areas, by a fly-in model or by hubbing, in order to maximize the resources in those areas.

Mr. Rob Morrison: Sure, but my question again was, how about letting the provinces hire based on their priorities?

Commr Brenda Lucki: They absolutely do.

Mr. Rob Morrison: Do they?

Commr Brenda Lucki: Yes, absolutely.

Mr. Rob Morrison: So the Province of Saskatchewan will hire based on the priorities of the Province of Saskatchewan, not based on federal priorities.

Commr Brenda Lucki: The cadets who go into the training academy are for the contract policing environment. As I said, the cadets will come in. They choose where they want to go. We try to accommodate that.

However, as for how many resources we can send back to each province, it is dependent on their budget. If they don't have the funds to allow for additional cadets, we can't simply give it to them.

Mr. Rob Morrison: I understand that. Thanks very much.

I have one quick question for CSIS. I notice that you've asked for \$7.2 million to improve core technical capabilities. Could you comment briefly on that, please?

Ms. Michelle Tessier (Deputy Director, Operations, Canadian Security Intelligence Service): Certainly, and thank you for the question.

I want to take the time to apologize on behalf of the director of CSIS, who fell ill. I'm his replacement today.

Basically, CSIS, of course, needs to stay modern in terms of its ability to do its work and to respond to its mandate. With that

comes our ability to have the tools, techniques and technological solutions to be able to do that. That money is to help us in that domain and to keep us—

Mr. Rob Morrison: Great.

The Chair: Keeping it financial here does show some progress.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Do I still have a minute?

The Chair: Yes, you still have a minute.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Ms. Tessier, I have a question for you.

The Canadian Security Intelligence Service has already confirmed that Huawei's 5G was problematic in Canada. As far as you know, is Huawei equipment already in place for 5G through different companies?

Ms. Michelle Tessier: You will understand that I am not in a position to provide details. However, I can tell you that CSIS is working closely with partners of the Government of Canada to advise the government.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: I was so hopeful.

Madam Damoff, you have five minutes.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Thank you, Chair.

I want to talk a bit more about the passenger protect program that we've put in place.

I served on the public safety committee in the last Parliament when we studied Bill C-59. One of the first meetings I had when I was elected was with a young man who was on the no-fly list because his name was the same as someone's on there. Sadly, that young man died by suicide before he saw the changes we made in Bill C-59, which put in place the framework and then the funding to implement it.

Unlike the United States, which put in a redress system right away, the previous government put in place a no-fly list without the framework and resources to allow people like this young man and others—whom I think almost all of us here have probably met with—who share a name on the no-fly list.

There is funding that's going to be flowing to this. What impact will that have, in particular for those no-fly list kids to be able to get their names off the list? Some of those kids aren't kids anymore. I was speaking to a couple of them at an event last year who are now adults and are being viewed in a very different way than when they were six years old and their name was on a no-fly list.

I wonder if you could talk about the impact this funding is going to have on those individuals.

• (1035)

Ms. Monik Beauregard: I have a couple of things as well to start. It's not about getting their names off. I think a lot of the individuals you're referring to are very likely not listed but just happen to have a name that is a very close match to somebody who is listed.

That being said, the Canadian travel number program, which is associated with the enhanced passenger protect program, will allow us to allocate a travel number to everybody who applies.

We have been doing a lot of outreach, for example, with the no-fly list kids and other stakeholder groups in Canadian society, and those who are interested are very aware of the progress of the program and that a Canadian travel number program will be established.

When we roll this out, it will allow anyone who feels they have had issues travelling in the past to apply for a number. If the issue is linked to the no-fly list, the SATA list, that number will allow us to deconflict ahead of travelling, 24 to 48 hours, to work with CBSA and the transport operation centre to deconflict that passenger from the number to the flight manifest and then be able to recognize that the person is not listed and allow that person to do what we all do, which is check in electronically and then just sail through the airport when we get there.

That is what the program will allow us to do. Of course, if the person who applies is listed, then another mechanism kicks in, which is already in place. For those individuals who happen to be listed, it is because they have met the threshold to be listed, and in those cases there is a recourse process for them to follow.

I'll also clarify that in Bill C-59 we have brought in a legislative amendment that allows the minister to also tell parents whether their children are listed. Before that, the minister would have been contravening the law by telling anyone.

Ms. Pam Damoff: I understand the families were quite pleased with that.

I have only a minute left.

Commissioner Kelly, I was going to ask you something else, but there have been a number of questions here about the conditions for people who are working in our prisons, and you've provided quite fulsome answers. Something you didn't touch on is that in the last Parliament we brought in Bill C-65, which means that employees in our institutions do not necessarily have to report if they are experiencing harassment and abuse. It allows them to go outside their direct superior, which was certainly the issue at Edmonton Max. I won't get into that because you won't have time to answer.

Will Bill C-65 help to solve some of the issues that were there before?

Ms. Anne Kelly: My understanding is that Bill C-65 will require employers, certainly in workplaces, to respond to reports of harassment and violence, and to give employees the choice of an informal resolution process or a neutral third party investigation, which will result in a recommendation. If the employee opts for the investigation, then the employer is obligated to implement the recommendations from the investigator.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Thank you.

The Chair: We have to leave it there.

I want to thank all of you for your testimony.

I want to seek guidance from colleagues. As you know, at the beginning of the meeting I raised the reconciliation issue between the votes and the table of expenditures, which are actually reconciled in only one instance. I know there are answers to this reconciliation issue because, in the case of the Canada Border Services Agency, they told me on the break that they can quite easily reconcile those numbers, as I am sure all the other departments can.

The question is, colleagues, do you wish me to call the vote in the present state, or do you wish me to defer the vote pending a reconciliation of the numbers?

• (1040)

Mr. Jack Harris: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

You made a reference to its being deemed to have been passed at a certain point, but that certain point is not at the end of today's meeting.

The Chair: No. Ultimately, whether this committee votes on it or whether it doesn't, there is a deemed vote at the end of the day, but there is a principle here. The principle is that members' votes should be informed votes, and the informed votes should be reconcilable to the tables.

Mr. Jack Harris: The only point I would make is that we have 11 witnesses here today. Are all of them going to be providing us answers, or are some of them going to be in charge of rectifying this problem?

The Chair: I'm assuming the department takes overall supervision. I'm absolutely certain that's easily done. Having said that, these are our numbers.

What's the sense from colleagues on both sides?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: I support you.

I agree with you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Pam.

Ms. Pam Damoff: When are they deemed adopted?

The Chair: I don't have that. It depends on the last supply day.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Do you know when that is?

This may all be a moot point. They may end up being deemed adopted regardless.

The Chair: They may be deemed adopted regardless. Even if they are deemed adopted, I think we need to establish a precedent at the beginning of this Parliament that members need to know what they're voting on, and we don't.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Ideally, we'd like to get those before they are deemed adopted, but it may end up being a moot point.

I don't know about my colleagues, but that's fine with me.

The Chair: Mr. Harris.

Mr. Jack Harris: Chairman, if they're going to be deemed adopted, let them be deemed adopted, and perhaps we could pass a motion objecting to the fact that we were unable to properly understand what was before our committee, in the hopes that this might be rectified the next time we have to deal with this.

I don't think we should vote for it under the circumstances at all.

The Chair: At this point, we can defer the vote, and on the first meeting back, possibly we'll have sufficient information. If we do have sufficient information, and the information is reconciled between the table and the expenditures, then we can move the vote at that point.

Is that agreeable to colleagues?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Okay.

I want to thank you on behalf of the committee. Your testimony is most informative and helpful, and I dare say that over the course of the life of this committee and the life of this Parliament, we'll be seeing all of you.

Thank you again.

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