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Chair

Mr. Kevin Sorenson

Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC)): Good afternoon, everyone. This is meeting number 50 of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security on Wednesday, October 3, 2012.

This afternoon we're beginning our consideration of Bill C-42, An Act to amend the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts.

We have a number of witnesses appearing before us today. Our first witness is the Honourable Vic Toews, Minister of Public Safety. We also have Commissioner Bob Paulson, Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. As well, from the Department of Public Safety, we have Richard Wex, the assistant deputy minister.

Our committee wants to thank all of you for coming back. You have appeared a number of times before our committee. Actually, you have appeared when we have asked. We very much appreciate that. Thank you for coming back at your earliest convenience.

The way the committee is going to work this afternoon is that the minister will be giving an opening statement. After one hour, he will have to leave. The commissioner and Assistant Deputy Minister Wex will stay and answer any questions we may have. What we will do is suspend after one hour and allow the minister an opportunity to leave, and then we will reconvene in one or two minutes.

Again, we want to thank Minister Toews. Because we are televised today, I would remind all members to kindly turn your cellphones off if they are by the microphones, or at least put them on silent or vibrate mode. That just makes things a lot easier. To all those in the audience, perhaps do that as well.

Minister, welcome back. We look forward to your comments.

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety): Thank you, Mr. Chair, for your invitation to speak about Bill C-42, the Enhancing Royal Canadian Mounted Police Accountability Act. I am pleased to be accompanied by the RCMP commissioner, Mr. Paulson, and the assistant deputy minister, Richard Wex, of the Department of Public Safety.

I would like to also mention that these two individuals had a lot to do with the completion of the 20-year contract signed between the RCMP and the various provinces. They put in a lot of hard work. The fact that all the provinces signed back on to the RCMP, with some changes in the contract, is a good indication of the satisfaction

of all provinces with the RCMP. It is also a credit to these two individuals and their staff and the work they did in that respect.

Mr. Chair, it is essential that Canadians have full confidence in the RCMP. However, this confidence has been tested over the past few years, which has highlighted certain challenges in the RCMP. As Canada's national police force, the RCMP must overcome these challenges and regain public trust. In particular, over the past number of months, Canadians have heard some extremely disturbing reports about the conduct of some RCMP officers. That's why our government made it clear that we would work closely with the commissioner to take action to restore pride in Canada's national police force.

Part of the problem is that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act has not evolved to allow the organization to keep pace with changes in modern police management, or, frankly, to meet public expectations. In fact, the RCMP Act has not been significantly amended in almost 25 years. Over the last decade, a number of stakeholders, committees, and inquiries have called for changes to the RCMP's accountability framework. The RCMP has made some changes to address these deficiencies, including implementing an external investigations and review policy, instituting operational response and readiness policies, and enhancing the conducted-energy weapons policy.

While it is clear that a culture change is needed within the RCMP, changes to the RCMP's legislative framework are also required.

The legislative amendments in Bill C-42 focus on three key areas. First, Mr. Chair, the bill creates a modern and independent civilian review and complaints commission for the RCMP, essentially referred to as CRCC, to replace the existing Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP, the CPC, and it provides it with enhanced powers.

• (1535)

Second, it imposes statutory obligations on the handling of criminal investigations of serious incidents involving RCMP members, which are designed to improve the transparency and public accountability of these investigations.

Third, the bill modernizes the RCMP's discipline, grievance, and human resource management framework, while also aligning the RCMP commissioner's human resource authorities with those of public sector leaders and other senior police executives.

I'd like to take a few moments to outline each of these three components, beginning with the new RCMP public complaints regime.

As committee members may know, complaints against the RCMP are currently handled by the CPC. However, there have been increasing concerns expressed by the public contract jurisdictions, parliamentary committees, public inquiries, and others that this commission lacks sufficient powers to effectively investigate public complaints about the conduct of RCMP officers. The proposed legislation responds to the key recommendation flowing from all of these groups.

Specifically, it would create a strengthened independent civilian review and complaints body for the RCMP that provides the new body with powers and authorities similar to other modern international, federal, and provincial review bodies. It also grants the new commission broad access to RCMP information, strengthens the commission's investigative powers, and allows the new commission the power to conduct policy reviews into RCMP activities, including those relating to national security.

Consistent with judicial inquiries and all other federal review bodies, such as the Security Intelligence Review Committee, the Auditor General, and the offices of the information and privacy commissioners, the new commission will make non-binding findings and recommendations to the commissioner and the Minister of Public Safety.

Mr. Chair, let me address this point clearly: the RCMP commissioner is held accountable for the operations of the RCMP and must decide whether to act on the findings and recommendations of the commission. The commissioner is accountable and responsible for the operations of the RCMP, and we will not undermine that accountability by making recommendations binding. However, consistent with the existing legislative requirements, it's also clear that whenever the RCMP commissioner decides not to act on commission recommendations, he must explain, in writing, the reasons for doing so to the new commission and to me.

While some have called for binding recommendations, others, such as Justice O'Connor and the RCMP Reform Implementation Council, support the approach of non-binding findings and recommendations.

Separate from the complaints process, Bill C-42 sets out a statutory framework to improve the transparency of serious criminal investigations of incidents involving RCMP members that result in death or serious injury. The RCMP will now be required, by statute, to refer serious criminal cases involving RCMP members to an independent provincial investigative body, where one exists—for example, British Columbia, Alberta, and Nova Scotia. This is in keeping with the provinces' authority for the administration of justice in their jurisdiction. In provinces and territories where such bodies don't exist, these investigations must be referred to another police service. Only in rare instances, and as a last resort, where neither of these options is available, would the RCMP undertake the investigation itself.

This framework is designed to address public concerns about the impartiality of RCMP members investigating other RCMP members who are involved in a serious incident. Some have called for the creation of a national investigative body, but what has been proposed in that sense would create significant redundancy in jurisdictions where a civilian investigative body already exists, while consuming

resources and delaying investigations. The most important consideration is that the provinces and the territories, which have the constitutional responsibility for policing and the administration of justice, have not called for this.

We will continue to work with the provinces and territories in this regard.

● (1540)

Mr. Chair, the last component of the bill modernizes the RCMP's discipline, grievance, and human resource management framework. The current processes embodied in the RCMP Act lack flexibility and are disjointed. Discipline and grievance processes carry heavy administrative burdens and can be drawn out for years.

For example, an RCMP member was suspended from duty after being arrested and charged with uttering threats and weapons offences. While the member was not permitted to work, he stayed on the payroll, receiving salary for 18 months. This is clearly a problem. Under Bill C-42, managers will be given the authority to impose remedial measures, like counselling and corrective sanctions, when performance and conduct are not acceptable.

The bottom line is that this legislation would also empower managers, allowing them to deal with issues before they turn into big problems. An example I've used before is this one. In August of 2004, a grievance was filed over a dinner allowance claim of \$15. Under the current system, it took seven years to obtain a final decision on the matter. Under this bill, that would be streamlined and dealt with in a matter of weeks. This is a vast improvement over the current system, where all formal sanctions must be handled through a time- and resource-consuming discipline board. Only in those cases where dismissal is being sought would the issue be referred to a conduct board.

Under the current grievance system, a formal, resource-intensive, paper-based process is the norm. With this legislation, front-line managers would have access to a less formal conflict management and resolution system that would allow for matters to be dealt with quickly, fairly, and effectively.

Similarly, we are proposing changes to the current authorities of the RCMP commissioner. Under the current regime, the commissioner, in contrast to other police chiefs, lacks the authority to directly make determinations on certain human resource processes that are necessary to effectively manage the organization.

Bill C-42 would enhance accountability by now permitting the RCMP commissioner to both appoint and promote the majority of the officers of the RCMP below the rank of deputy commissioner. That being said, the federal cabinet process, through orders in council, would be used to appoint the commissioner and all deputy commissioners.

The commissioner would be given the authority to establish a system to create a seamless way to respond to harassment complaints in a timely, transparent, and fair manner that would be specific to the investigation and resolution of complaints where a respondent is an RCMP member. This would help to overcome the current challenges of attempting to simultaneously apply the Treasury Board harassment policy and the RCMP Act to addressing harassment concerns.

Finally, Mr. Chair, we propose changes to the current human resource structure in which the RCMP employees are divided into three categories: regular members, civilian members, and public service employees. This requires three different human resource systems, making it difficult to manage human resources efficiently and effectively across the organization.

To increase human resource efficiencies, the proposed legislation provides a mechanism through which Treasury Board may convert current civilian members to public service employees, thus reducing the number of categories of employees by one.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, the proposed changes to the RCMP Act are designed to enhance the accountability of the RCMP and to support the implementation of the new 20-year contract agreements entered into with the provinces and territories this year, which I mentioned at the onset of my comments. Accountability and oversight were focal points for the provinces, territories, and municipalities in the announcements of the new police service agreements. In fact, the British Columbia justice minister has stated that she is “very pleased” and thinks it’s a very positive first step.

We have listened to our provincial and territorial counterparts and recognize that in order to keep pace with changes in modern policing, reform of the RCMP’s legislative framework is required. I have spent the summer consulting RCMP members, community leaders, and Canadians on this bill. The response has been encouraging, and I believe this bill addresses the concerns I have heard.

Mr. Chair, even David Eby of the B.C. Civil Liberties Association has said that—and I quote—“it’s good to see these changes coming”.

● (1545)

In closing, thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide you with an overview of this important legislation designed to help bolster confidence and accountability in the RCMP. I look forward to following your deliberations on the bill and possible amendments. Our goal is to ensure we have the best bill possible.

I’m now happy to answer any questions you may have.

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

We’ll move into the first round of questioning, a seven-minute round. We’ll begin with Ms. Bergen, please, for seven minutes.

Ms. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Minister, for being here, as well as Commissioner Paulson and Mr. Wex. We appreciate your time.

Mr. Minister, it’s unbelievable, actually, that the RCMP have had to operate under such an old piece of legislation that has not been updated, and they have had to function. I think it’s a credit to their leadership and to the members that they have been able to operate with such success.

As you mentioned, certainly there have been some challenges over the last little while, things I know members themselves want to see corrected, but I think as we look at what they’ve had to deal with under the old piece of legislation, it’s good to see the new bill come forward and see the changes it will make.

One thing that I didn’t hear you address, Minister, and I am wondering if you could talk a bit about are the costs associated with Bill C-42, specifically with the new complaints review commission, as well as modernizing the human resources framework. Do you have any comments you can make on that?

Hon. Vic Toews: Thank you, Ms. Bergen.

The new Civilian Review and Complaints Commission, the CRCC, will be given an increase of approximately \$5 million, giving the new commission base funding of \$10.4 million per year. I think the base funding is \$5 million, but they’ve been appropriating about \$8 million to do that, so we’re simply moving the base to \$10 million, which reflects the costs for that particular commission, we believe.

In terms of the RCMP human resource regime, the RCMP will receive up to an additional \$9.8 million to enhance their discipline, grievance, and human resource management framework.

Ms. Candice Bergen: Thank you very much for that.

In relation to modernizing the framework, one of the problems that has arisen over the last few years would be the accusations and complaints of harassment. I’m thinking specifically about sexual harassment, which has been quite a problem, and for all Canadians it’s disturbing to think that anyone would have to deal with sexual harassment in the workplace, and especially our RCMP.

You did talk a little bit specifically about how under the old regime a complaint would be dealt with, whether it would be an issue of a dining receipt, which I think you mentioned, or something as serious as an accusation of harassment.

Can you explain to us how under the current legislation, the current act—because I think most Canadians are not aware of how drawn out and how difficult the whole process is—harassment and issues like that are dealt with, and how modernizing this will really bring it into line with pretty well every other sector and every other organization that deals with human resources issues?

Hon. Vic Toews: I’ll make a few introductory comments, and then perhaps either the commissioner or Mr. Wex can take it from there.

As I understand it now, the RCMP has met with the challenge of essentially having two regimes that govern that type of complaint. It would be the Treasury Board guidelines and the RCMP Act. So they’re trying to mesh two different systems in terms of dealing with this type of a system.

But with the complexity of dealing with a sexual harassment complaint, even where the complaint is straightforward and the evidence is straightforward, it becomes a very complicated, adversarial-based system that literally drags on for years, and that’s not good for the health of the organization or the culture inside the organization.

Commissioner, I don’t know if you have anything to add.

● (1550)

Commissioner Bob Paulson (Commissioner, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): Thank you, Minister.

What I would add is that under the existing statute, the current approach probably gives rise to a lot of criticism about the culture, because in the case of harassment, the Treasury Board does have pretty clear policies respecting early recognition of harassment and engagement at the earliest opportunity to try to resolve the conflict.

Then you have a culture of police concerned about accusations of harassment, and confusion arises about how to handle the suggestion that there is misconduct in the workplace. So you will have code of conduct investigations launched while harassment initiatives are under way. They conflict with one another and cause a good deal of confusion for our managers and our supervisors, who, under this new approach, are going to be asked to manage that conduct at the first opportunity.

What we're doing is streamlining and getting rid of the need to have this bifurcated approach to these instances.

The act also calls for an early conflict resolution mechanism that will have to be applied and deployed by me, so that we deal with behaviours in the workplace as behaviours in the workplace.

Many of the incidents in the public consciousness right now shouldn't be understood as sexual harassment or harassment issues. Many of them are in fact accusations of criminality.

We want to get to a workplace that is respectful, and to one where, when conflicts arise in the workplace, our managers are able to manage and deal with them in the first instance.

I think it will go a long way towards not only streamlining our response but also helping fix the culture of managing the workplace.

The Chair: You have about three quarters of a minute.

Ms. Candice Bergen: Okay, thank you.

Minister, can you comment further on the consultations that have taken place with provinces and stakeholders, as you described them?

Hon. Vic Toews: One thing that the provinces and territories wanted was a system that is responsive to local conditions. It's for this reason that they welcome the idea that their own civilian bodies would be able to take over the complaint investigation, which gives a local flavour and a sense of local accountability. Even though, ultimately, matters are dealt with at a federal level, the actual determinations of these bodies, at that local level, I think can be very helpful in restoring confidence and local accountability.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

Thank you, Ms. Bergen.

We'll move to Madame Doré Lefebvre, please, for seven minutes.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will be sharing my time with Ms. Ashton.

Thank you for being here today, Mr. Minister. We are delighted to be studying this bill in committee, to be taking the time to examine it properly and to see how we can work together to improve it.

Mr. Minister, you have said that amendments at committee were needed. We would like to see amendments focused on three main areas: first of all, a truly independent oversight agency and

independent investigations; second, a balanced approach regarding disciplinary provisions and labour relations; and third, adequate measures to address harassment in the workplace.

We believe that the RCMP must be modernized in order to restore public confidence in that organization. Lastly, like Commissioner Paulson, we believe that this legislation is not enough to uphold public confidence. Substantial reforms aimed at changing the underlying problems regarding the RCMP's corporate culture are needed in order to foster a more open, co-operative and respectful work environment for everyone.

The minister has obviously not been able to provide the leadership needed in order to address the broader issues facing the RCMP, and this must change. The NDP believes that we need to go even further regarding these issues, particularly the issue of sexual harassment.

I will end there and give the floor to Ms. Ashton.

● (1555)

[*English*]

The Chair: Ms. Ashton, go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Thank you very much, Ms. Doré Lefebvre.

[*English*]

Thank you, Minister Toews and Commissioner Paulson, for being with us today.

Minister Toews, we've heard statements on this bill for a few days now, but I am concerned that your opening statements don't actually refer to the words "sexual harassment", which is in fact the elephant in the room that so many Canadians are talking about and wanting to see direct action on. There is reference to legislation not being enough and this being about a change in culture.

Have you asked the RCMP for a specific policy on sexual harassment?

Hon. Vic Toews: Let me deal with some of the issues that your colleague brought up, because I don't want to leave those unanswered.

The issue of the national body, for example, that the NDP is asking for has not been asked for by any of the provinces or territories. In fact, that would be exactly counter to what the provinces and the territories have wanted, because they want more accountability at a local level. That national body would again be Ottawa dictating or conducting proceedings that I think would be inappropriate. We need to ensure that it is much more responsive at a local level. This is in keeping with what the provinces and the territories want.

With respect to the issue of cultural changes that your colleague raised, I think what we see now in the legislation—this deals with the issue of sexual harassment—is the fact that the present legislation impedes our ability to make cultural changes.

There are such inordinate delays in the process and a lack of clarity in the process. Conduct that should be corrected immediately is not corrected.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Could I pick up on that concept in terms of a deadline? I think you're touching on a key point around changing culture. What kind of timeframe are you looking for as minister, and certainly Canadians are looking for, where we can see that kind of cultural change?

Hon. Vic Toews: Look, we're dealing with an organization of some 30,000 people. This is not something that will happen tomorrow, but certainly the process has already begun.

One of the major stumbling blocks to get that culture change is the current legislation, no question about that. The sooner we get this legislation in place, the more we can take the blocks away from changing that culture and dealing with the issue of sexual harassment.

I know the RCMP does gender-based audits to ensure that what they are doing is appropriate. I think that audit is currently under way. I think this is all part of the issue of how we deal with sexual harassment at the organizational level, or the issue of sexual discrimination at the organizational level, so that we can deal with some of the more immediate or localized problems.

Ms. Niki Ashton: If I could follow up on the kind of investigating that's happening right now, we know current investigations will be completed by the old system. We're concerned about the progress of reports, such as the ongoing public complaints investigation on issues of workplace harassment within the RCMP.

We've heard about several layoffs under the old CPC. We're concerned and we want to know how will that hinder progress on these investigations while the RCMP, with this bill passing, will be integrating a new complaints commission. What will that mean for the investigations taking place now?

Hon. Vic Toews: As a general rule, you can't impose new standards on an old process—I think you would know that from any legal context, any grievance context—without the consent of the parties involved.

Obviously there is a transition period, and the RCMP and the department are working with that.

Commissioner, do you have any specific comments that you could add to what I've already stated?

Commr Bob Paulson: With respect to investigating complaints... was that the origin of the question?

There is the internal sort of investigation of complaints that are made—public complaints—there are harassment complaints, and then there is the CPC's managing of complaints. So we're talking about a number of spheres of complaints.

Since 2005, the RCMP has received approximately 1,100 harassment complaints. It may be interesting for the committee to understand that of those 1,100 or so harassment complaints, 93% of them are predominantly around misuse of authority and personal comportment issues. The sexual harassment complaints, which are in the public concern right now, comprise about 3% of those.

Those complaints are being investigated right now. I've talked to this committee, I believe, about what I've done since I've been commissioner to try to streamline, centralize, and action any complaints so that the membership has confidence, first of all, that

there is a viable complaints system, that the complainants are kept apprised of those things.

I'm not sure I got the full gist of your question, but—

• (1600)

The Chair: Thank you, Commissioner.

We will now move to the government side.

Mr. Leef.

Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC): Thank you very much, Commissioner, Minister, and Mr. Wex for attending today.

Minister, I'm just going to quickly read back to you from your statement:

Over the last decade, there have been a number of stakeholders, committees, and inquiries that have called for changes to the RCMP's accountability framework.

Later in your statement you say, "We've listened to our provincial and territorial counterparts..."

I have an example of a review that was done in the RCMP. It's from my riding in the Yukon. It's called "Sharing Common Ground". I recognize not everybody will be familiar with the document. For the benefit of the commissioner and all Canadians, one of the things they highlight early in their executive summary is that we have heard many accounts of policing excellence, including stories of RCMP members acting above and beyond their normal duties. The purpose of the review is to improve the quality of policing services for all citizens in the territory. Certainly, I know from my constituents in the Yukon that the RCMP play a valuable role, and will continue to do so well into our future. We thank you for that commitment and dedication to service in the Yukon.

On the point raised by the opposition, Mr. Minister, about a national body reviewing these things, you spoke directly to the point that this would be counterintuitive with respect to the recommendations and things you've heard. To support that point, I would like to read a couple of sections from that executive summary.

They say "...to ensure that community needs and values are reflected in territorial policing policies and practices" is a key theme of "Sharing Common Ground".

They highlight that "Citizens want...an effective complaints process and they want to ensure that an independent investigation will be undertaken when the RCMP is involved in a death or serious...investigation". They want "greater input into establishing...priorities for "M" Division", which is what Yukon's division is called.

It says, "Citizens expressed significant support for a local and responsive complaint process, and had considerable interest in the issue of 'police investigating police'". They want input into that.

This executive summary essentially highlights what you were talking about a little earlier: that a national body would run counter to what is written here in a territorial review on policing services in M Division. Have you seen that as a similar reflection of public opinion in other provinces and other reviews?

Hon. Vic Toews: Absolutely. That statement is a very good summary of what I heard right across Canada from all of the jurisdictions. In fact, I am not aware of any jurisdiction that has advocated having some kind of a national body to do this. One of the hold-ups in the negotiations, as Mr. Wex can testify to, was that this process was outside their jurisdiction. Remember, when we talk about the RCMP, it's not simply a national police force. When we sign an agreement with British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, and Manitoba, our national police force becomes a provincial police force in that jurisdiction. It's answerable to the attorney general in that jurisdiction. There are then further agreements with municipalities. The RCMP then becomes a municipal police force as well. Taxpayers are saying, "We're paying for this at a municipal level. We're paying for it at a provincial level. Why wouldn't we have some level of accountability?" This legislation was designed to answer that. One of the strongest advocates was British Columbia. Your summary from the Yukon report would reflect that. I am not aware of anyone who would take a different position other than the federal NDP.

•(1605)

Mr. Ryan Leef: We spent some time talking about restoring public confidence in the RCMP. Can you highlight how this will restore confidence in the RCMP for the members of the force?

Hon. Vic Toews: Let me speak very briefly, and then I'm going to turn it over to the commissioner.

What happens now in the organization is that because of the delay in resolving what are sometimes fairly straightforward problems—not that they aren't serious, but they're straightforward—that could be resolved very quickly...the \$15 grievance becomes a seven-year process. That has all kinds of negative ramifications, aside from the expense of the resolution of that kind of disagreement. There is unhappiness inside the RCMP, there is tension, there are disagreements between a commanding officer and officers under his or her command. That then detracts from focusing on the job of policing.

The current legislation, in fact, impedes quite significantly a cultural change in the RCMP, so let's get that impediment out of the way. Then, with a new legislative framework and the positive policies that this commissioner is putting in place, in terms of tackling issues of harassment, including sexual harassment...I think that will go a long way in terms of dealing with the issue of cultural change.

Commissioner.

Commr Bob Paulson: I would add briefly, Minister, that the biggest challenge I have today is dealing with 99% of my membership, who are incredibly dedicated professionals who are going to bat for Canadians day in and day out. They repeatedly raise with me the idea that they are getting tarred with the same brush as some of these other more notorious cases, which, as the minister points out, linger on and are seemingly resistant to quick, just, and fair adjudication. So the sooner we can have a system that reaffirms a fair conduct management regime within the RCMP, then 99% of the members who love this job will be much happier.

The Chair: Thank you, Commissioner.

We'll now move back to the opposition, and we'll go to Mr. Scarpaleggia, please, for seven minutes.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

Welcome, Minister, Commissioner, and Mr. Wex.

Commissioner, when you were appointed to the position, I remember you came to committee and said to us that you were going to use your obvious leadership skills and bring order to the force; you were going to be decisive and really put your foot down. Of course, we were all happy to hear that.

Did you know at the time that the systems you were dealing with would not be adequate to allow you to do your job? As I understand the timing of things, it was after you took the position that you published the letter to the minister, calling on the minister to bring in this kind of legislation.

My question is, were you not aware of the problems that existed with the clashing systems, or intertwining or overlapping systems, when you took the job? What made you all of a sudden realize that you had to have a bill here if you wanted to solve this, that you had considerable leadership skills and you were dedicated, but that just wouldn't be enough?

Commr Bob Paulson: I can almost point to the moment in time when my concern crystallized. It was in the inability to appeal what I felt was a ridiculous outcome in a disciplinary case. I had observed discipline issues throughout my career in the force and had always tried to stay away from them, but I never understood the problem from the commissioner's point of view in trying to transform this organization and to bring about meaningful change in the short term.

When I gave instructions to my staff to not let that decision stand, they said, "Well, it's too bad, Commissioner. There is nothing you can do about that because that's just the way it is." I don't think I wrote the minister to say that. We had met several times and the minister was alive to the challenges that the force was facing.

•(1610)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: We're talking about some pretty fuzzy concepts. Understandably, changing culture is always a very hard thing to define, and we're talking about management systems that are very complex. I was reading the current grievance process, and I had to reread it several times, because, as you say, it's extremely complex and tortuous and so on. We're dealing with some pretty fuzzy concepts that are hard to grasp.

It would seem to me that the cases we're concerned about here are the flagrant examples of misconduct: stealing, as you said—you gave an example of stealing—or sexual harassment. These are not grey areas; they're really black and white. I'm wondering whether you would really require a change in management systems to communicate these rights and wrongs to officers.

I take your point that 99% of the officers are wonderful and are doing great work, but how would you compare the problems at the RCMP with problems in other police forces across the country, municipal and provincial police forces? Are they worse? Are they better? Do the other forces have better systems that create better cultures?

What is your comparison? What is your benchmark?

Hon. Vic Toews: Let me jump in there.

If you look at almost any modern, professional police force, there is a flexibility in their grievance process, in their ability to discipline, which the RCMP simply does not have.

While the concept of sexual harassment might be clear in certain cases—and it's not always clear, because there are subtleties, sometimes, with the way these things are perpetrated—sometimes, even if it's clear, an officer can say “I want a grievance process”, and the board is established and it becomes an issue for years, rather than letting a line commander say to this individual, “This conduct is unacceptable, and it will stop today.”

You don't have the clear authority to do that. This legislation, I believe, will give that clear authority.

I didn't want to steal your thunder, Commissioner. I don't know whether you have anything to add.

Commr Bob Paulson: I would agree with you, Minister, but I would add that one of the principles in this legislation is to have my managers manage. I need my supervisors and my leaders to do their jobs. Having this elaborate, big machine that is seen as the monolith that you go into to try to get your disputes resolved, and maybe seven years later you'll get them figured out, is just not doing it, and it is contributing to the dysfunction in the culture.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Have you estimated how much your new complaints body will require to do its job? It's one thing to have a law and it's one thing to have a complaints mechanism in place, but if it doesn't have the resources it needs, you're still going to have problems down the line. It's all about enforcement. I'm sure I don't need to tell you that.

Hon. Vic Toews: I indicated in an answer to Ms. Bergen's question that the base will be brought up to \$10.4 million a year from \$5 million. I pointed out also that there has been supplemental funding that brought it up to \$8 million or so.

So there are additional resources, in recognition of exactly the problem you have identified.

•(1615)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Do you think the RCMP should have access to the same kinds of information as the Security Intelligence Review Committee? I'm told there's a problem there: that the SIRC is not restricted in certain information it can access, whereas under this legislation, according to Mr. Kennedy, for example, the complaints commission might not have the same latitude as the SIRC.

I was wondering whether you could tell me why.

The Chair: Please respond very quickly, Mr. Wex.

Mr. Richard Wex (Assistant Deputy Minister, Department of Public Safety): This is a recommendation that came out of many reports, to increase significantly the access the body would have to information.

One of the problems at the moment is that the current review body has access to relevant information, but it's not clear who decides what's relevant. The new bill proposes that the new body will, if it deems it is relevant, have access to it.

There are a couple of exceptions, including with respect to privileged information. At the moment, the current complaints body

does not have access to privileged information. Under the new bill, the new body will have access to privileged information if it's deemed to be relevant and necessary. So much greater access to information is an area that this bill addresses.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Wex.

We'll move back to the official opposition and Madame Doré Lefebvre.

[*Translation*]

You have five minutes.

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

Mr. Minister, a number of reports and several former commissioners have called for greater independence for the public complaints commissioner. Mr. Minister, when you were thinking about creating a new civilian review and complains commission, why did you decide to have it report only to you, rather than directly to Parliament?

[*English*]

Hon. Vic Toews: I don't review any complaints.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: No. Under Bill C-42, that commission will report directly to you, rather than to Parliament. Why was it decided to proceed in this fashion in the bill?

[*English*]

Hon. Vic Toews: Oh, I understand. You're saying that ultimately the report is provided to the commissioner and to the minister.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: Yes, rather than it being presented directly to Parliament.

[*English*]

Hon. Vic Toews: I see. I thought there was some kind of suggestion that I was adjudicating complaints. I want to assure you that I'm not involved in adjudicating complaints.

The report comes to the commissioner essentially in order for the commissioner to look at the recommendations, because the commissioner is responsible for the administration of the RCMP and the administration of the force. That commissioner has to determine it: “Is this recommendation something that is consistent with the overall management of the force?”

Now, he can implement that recommendation, or if he doesn't implement that recommendation, then he has to put in writing why he doesn't agree with that recommendation. But in that process, I don't have any involvement. The report comes to me. I'm answerable in Parliament for the RCMP. That's my function.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: Okay.

I was also wondering if you consulted the members who will be directly affected by Bill C-42 before it was drafted.

[English]

Hon. Vic Toews: This has been a work in progress—even before the commissioner came onto the scene. The predecessor bill was a much larger bill and encompassed the issue of unionization. As you will recall, certain decisions of the courts came out that talked about the constitutional right to unionize, which created significant confusion because of the lack of clarity in those decisions.

We waited for a long period of time for the courts to clarify that. Ultimately we said no, that we were going to proceed without that unionization issue. Subsequently, the courts did clarify it, after we had tabled the legislation.

But in respect of the unionization issue and various issues, not only have I had extensive discussions with members of the RCMP, but the commissioner has, and certainly, through Public Safety, I have had extensive briefings on every aspect of this bill, including the three main components that I'm bringing forward today in the form of Bill C-42.

I've had informal discussions with RCMP officers as late as this summer, when I travelled from Labrador to the Northwest Territories, discussing issues of discipline and sexual harassment and concerns about the RCMP that they might have, and I have invited them to bring those concerns forward.

But generally speaking, I think the sense I got was that these reforms were welcome, and we were urged to bring them forward as quickly as possible.

• (1620)

[Translation]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: So there were no official consultations with members regarding this bill before it was introduced.

[English]

Hon. Vic Toews: There were certainly significant and formal consultations with the provinces and the territories on this.

The Chair: You have 15 seconds.

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: That's really fast.

The Chair: Maybe we'll just leave it—

[Translation]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: Yes, I will drop it.

Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: All right. We'll come back. We'll give you another opportunity.

We'll now move to the government again.

We'll move to Mr. Hawn, please.

Welcome to the committee.

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's good to be here.

Thank you, Minister and Mr. Wex.

Thank you, Commissioner. Thank you for your service in both uniforms.

Overhauling a system like this is obviously not easy when it has been in place for decades.

Minister or Commissioner, did you start with a blank page or did you look at other forces' models of grievance systems in particular? The Canadian Forces is undergoing a similar kind of activity now called Bill C-15. Or did you look at the OPP or other large forces to base some of your lessons learned, best practices sort of thing...?

Hon. Vic Toews: The development of this bill was done with an understanding of what other major police forces were doing, so that did inform our discussion in that respect.

I became the public safety minister early in 2010. As I understood it, this preceded my taking of that office. Those consultations, with an examination of other provincial bodies, municipal bodies, to see how they did it, certainly left us with the overall impression—it certainly left me with the overall impression—that we could learn quite a few good lessons from that.

The one complicating area, which has been clarified as a result of core decisions, is the issue of unionization—how that works. We left that out because we simply could not wait in order to deal with some of these pressing issues.

Mr. Wex, I don't know if you could...

Mr. Richard Wex: Thank you, Minister.

The only thing I would add is that we had the benefit of a number of major reports, dating back seven or eight years now—from the Auditor General, in 2003; from Justice O'Connor, in 2006-07; from the Brown task force; and consultations with numerous stakeholders. That informed the development of a number of the elements of the bill, including the strengthened public complaints body and the serious incident investigation framework.

We certainly benefited from all of those, as well as our own assessment of various jurisdictions, including internationally.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Thank you. I have a couple of quick questions.

The issue of gender-based audit came up, and the timing on that. Is there any forecast as to when that audit will be completed?

Hon. Vic Toews: Well, all I can say is that it is a work in progress. I think it's a very important report because the objective of the assessment is to provide advice to the commissioner on whether the RCMP's recruitment and promotion policies are gender-neutral and whether their applications provide equal opportunity for female regular members. It is still a work in progress.

I'm certain that the commissioner is moving as quickly as he can on that matter, but it is a very important and complex issue.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Speaking of a work in progress, Minister, you mentioned that you can't resolve old grievances under a new system; you have to deal with those under the old system.

Do you have any idea of that work in progress—how many we're talking about and how long those might take?

Commr Bob Paulson: Well, if we go on our record, it will take quite a long time.

We do have some stats here in terms of how many grievances are with the External Review Committee, and that's in the neighbourhood of about 70, I understand. On the public complaints, I've been working very hard to try to get rid of that backlog. I'm confident that within the next year and a half or so—I don't want to write cheques I can't cash—we'll be up to date. We've been processing a lot of those complaints.

We have broken down the backlog, and we're devoted to getting that done.

•(1625)

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Thank you.

Commissioner, you threw out some numbers. You said that about 3% of the 1,100 complaints were sexual harassment complaints—that raw number.

Do you have any idea how that compares with other similarly large organizations, like the CF, the OPP, and so on?

Commr Bob Paulson: Not in terms of the numbers of sexual harassment complaints. My gut tells me it's on par with other organizations.

I can say, though, that in comparison to public service employees overall, with respect to harassment complaints generally, without breaking them down into the specific nature of the harassment.... In the RCMP, for example, we have 33% of female personnel who report having been the subject of harassing behaviours over the past two years. These are not complaints; this is a survey. In the public service, it's 31%.

In the RCMP, 26% of males report having been the subject of harassing behaviour. In the public service, it's about 25%.

I think our numerical comparisons are on par, but of course we're the national police force and we can't have that.

The Chair: Thanks very much, Mr. Hawn. Your time is up.

We'll now move back to Ms. Ashton, please.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Thank you.

Mr. Toews, we've heard about the increased powers as a result of this bill, that the commissioner will have to dismiss members, and the necessity of that, given the cumbersome process as it is. This power could also be delegated by the commissioner to others, but all decisions then come back to the commissioner, and you, as the minister.

My question would be, how can the agents who are victims of any form of harassment, and ultimately Canadians, have confidence in a system where the discretionary power is given to an individual rather than to an independent and transparent outside process?

Commr Bob Paulson: I think it's important that we not blend the response to harassment and the discipline. What this bill seeks to do in respect of conduct is to separate conduct that needs to be corrected and have it corrected by managers at the lowest possible level as soon as possible.

Those behaviours that attract the requirement to have people removed from the force will have all of the checks and balances that I think we can reasonably expect to have in the administrative disciplinary system. I think the members have to have absolute confidence that when a question around their removal from the force is raised, whether it be on the back of a harassment complaint or on the back of some other misconduct—which is the exception—they will have due process, and due process in terms of the External Review Committee reviewing the circumstances, having a conduct board weigh the circumstances, having me as the final authority offer a decision that can be taken to the Federal Court if they want it to go that far.

Ms. Niki Ashton: I appreciate that commitment.

It's almost a qualitative scenario, where somebody may feel deterred from going ahead with this process because it's not an independent process. We might not end up, as a result, dealing with these kinds of complaints because people don't feel safe to do so. That's the concern we're raising about this bill, and my colleague raised it earlier as well.

Commr Bob Paulson: Well, I think we need to spend more time then. I don't think that's the result of this bill.

In a harassment situation people will understand very well the process, the reliability of the process, and the availability of a just result earlier on. Whether that's achieved through an independent arbiter or not can be debated, I suppose.

It shouldn't be understood that anything in this bill is proposing anything that would take away from the fair, expedient application of conflict resolution in the workplace.

The Chair: Thank you very much. I see that our time is at 4:30. We're going to suspend.

We're going to come back to you, Ms. Ashton, because you have another minute and a half, and we're going to suspend for about one minute. We'll allow the minister to get to his next meeting, and then we will come back.

To the committee, don't leave, and if you're leaving, don't leave for long. We'll suspend just for a few moments.

•(1625)

(Pause)

•(1630)

The Chair: We'll call this meeting back to order. In our first hour we have heard from Minister Toews, the Minister of Public Safety and National Security, as well as from our Commissioner of the RCMP, Commissioner Paulson, as well as Deputy Minister Richard Wex.

The minister has had to leave. We were in the middle of Ms. Ashton's question to the commissioner, and we'll come back to her and give her the last minute and a half.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Thank you Chair.

Thank you, Commissioner Paulson, for being here again. I know we had the chance to hear from you in the status of women committee, and very much connected to that discussion, you referenced the gender audit that's currently taking place.

When can we expect it to be public? And what do you intend to do with it?

Commr Bob Paulson: The gender audit, as the minister spoke of moments ago, is in its draft form. I've just received it. We are working through it. We're going to make some changes. I would expect that it would be a couple of weeks, perhaps a month, before we have a final copy, and I'm happy to share it with everyone.

What I propose to do with it is to take its findings and weave them into some of the strategies we've already deployed in respect of new policies governing workplace behaviours, and to amend our policies to the extent we can to address some of the observations that I think are being made in that audit in terms of how the RCMP has responded to gender issues in the force.

The Chair: You have half a minute.

Ms. Niki Ashton: The question, just to recap, is this. Are we saying that two weeks to a month from now we can expect this document to come out?

Commr Bob Paulson: Yes.

Ms. Niki Ashton: That's very interesting. I look forward to hearing answers to the other questions.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Ashton.

We'll now move back to Ms. Bergen, please.

Ms. Candice Bergen: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Commissioner, I would like you to expand a little further. Maybe for the sake of all the members of the committee, compare and contrast a current example of harassment. If someone's complaining of harassment, how would the current system deal with it? How would the new system deal with it under the new legislation? Then compare it to, let's say, another police organization, or really any other organization.

My point is that if you work in the private sector or the public sector, there are ways businesses and organizations handle complaints, and it's done within the company or organization. There are best practices and human resources management processes. I don't know of an example of a basic work complaint for which a company or organization would bring in an independent company and it would deal with it. Maybe I'm missing something.

Can you please explain the current method and compare and contrast that to what's coming forward?

Commr Bob Paulson: Currently, if someone were to make a complaint of harassment, the person would do so to either his or her supervisor or to the alleged harasser's supervisor. A couple of streams of activity would engage.

If it's alleged harassment against a regular member or a police officer, there's a question as to whether that alleged conduct constitutes a violation of our code of conduct. If it does, we often embark on an investigative sort of crime and punishment approach to the problem. The complainant is left standing there looking at the process and wondering what's happening. Very little effort, in some cases, is put towards modifying or rectifying the conflict in the workplace. That's the code of conduct approach, which is confusing for the complainant. People often get entrenched and locked into

positions, and there's no room to go back and resolve the underlying conflict.

Meanwhile, we have tried to apply the Treasury Board's rules and policies to workplace harassment. They call for early recognition and engagement of the complainant, keeping the complainant apprised of what's going, and having proactive systems in the workplace to do all of these things.

These two streams of activities collide, and as a result, the complainant is often left unsatisfied. That's why, in some of the literature, you will see people saying that they don't have confidence in the harassment complaint because it results in a big, protracted investigative effort to find evidence. There's more downside to it than what I just described.

In the new process, we intend to use a process. In fact, the legislation calls for me to deploy an early conflict management system in the workplace, as we are already beginning to do in some workplaces, to address instances of conflict immediately. Where there are complaints, we will apply an improved version of the Treasury Board guidelines to keep the complainant involved and keep the complainant apprised, and we will not allow the code of conduct to interfere with the proper management of the complaint.

• (1635)

Ms. Candice Bergen: Let's say in cases that are not serious incidents, but again are at the lowest level, there would be the opportunity, again, as in most organizations, to employ educational ways of dealing with it—mediation, mitigation, and those kinds of things. Right now, your human resource managers are not really able to use any tools. Even though they are supposed to be managing the members who are under them, they actually aren't able to. Is that correct? You now can use education and things like that.

Commr Bob Paulson: Yes, that's essentially correct. But I don't want to leave you with the impression that we are not actively trying to deploy means of rectifying conflict in the workplace early. The problem is that this enormously burdensome code of conduct investigative stream interferes with that. It's not as efficient as it needs to be.

Ms. Candice Bergen: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go to Mr. Kennedy...or Mr. Stewart, I'm sorry. Welcome to the committee, Mr. Stewart. You have five minutes.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Even my mom gets my name mixed up, and she named me.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for coming today, Commissioner Paulson.

I have a lot of concern about sexual harassment. I have a very good close family friend who was in the RCMP, who did leave, and the stories she told were fairly outrageous, so this is something that I take very seriously.

I sense a bit of a paradox or a clash in the account of this. On one side you say that 99% of the force is absolutely fine and there are only a few bad apples who are perhaps the problem. On the other side you say there's a cultural problem that needs to be fixed. I'm unsure about which story this piece of legislation is trying to fix. Is it just a few bad apples, or is there a much larger cultural problem within the RCMP that needs addressing?

● (1640)

Commr Bob Paulson: I think both. I think we have seen instances where we've had some spectacular stories of these few bad apples that have attracted, properly, the condemnation of Canadians, who are wondering what's going on in Canada's national police force. So that's true.

I think it's also true to say that the cultural problems of the RCMP have been fairly well researched and understood. If I may try to sort of synthesize what that is, it is trying to modernize this paramilitary organization, which has only just come through one sort of cycle of service for females. It has been about 37 years since females entered the force, and generally 35 years is a career in the RCMP. We haven't kept pace—we haven't kept pace with modern business practices, management practices, leadership principles, with respect to how we govern the workplace.

This is not to say that the place is in a shambles—it's not—but we do have to change that culture. We are doing a number of things, including some of the proposals in this legislation, which I think will go a long way to breaking down the notion that everything gets resolved through a protracted, adversarial sort of legal system that requires everybody to be right all the time, to a system where people sit down at the earliest possible opportunity and managers and supervisors come out of a meeting with a result that allows for a respectful workplace.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Would you expect an increase in sexual harassment claims to come forward, or complaints? Do you think people would come forward because previously they were deterred by the awkwardness of the system?

Commr Bob Paulson: I haven't spent a lot of time considering that, but I can tell you that just in the last several months we've noticed an increase in harassment complaints. Right now we're at about 125 current harassment complaints. The last time I was before...I'm not sure if it was this committee or the other committee, but we were in the high 80s.

I want people to have confidence in the process to mediate and resolve their complaints. Hopefully, it doesn't result in complaints. Hopefully, it results in early resolution. But I think it's probably reasonable to expect an increase in complaints.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: I appreciate your candour. Thank you very much.

I was wondering if the minister asked you to make the issue of sexual harassment a priority in your work.

Commr Bob Paulson: He didn't have to. I think I was appointed when the walls were falling down, so....

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Have there been any formal guidelines or anything set in place under which he would like to see you reporting back on how the culture is changing, or was it left quite wide open?

Commr Bob Paulson: Well, I don't know out of those options that I have an A or a B. I think the minister shares my concern with what's going on in the force, and he has been very supportive in terms of trying to bring processes to bear on what the problem is.

The Chair: You have half a minute, sir.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Okay.

You're confident, then, that going forward you have enough resources to actually tackle this cultural problem within the RCMP. In addition to this new piece of legislation, there are adequate resources provided for the government to fix this problem.

Commr Bob Paulson: As the minister mentioned, there is a projected cost, which was in our reform agenda, and there had been money set aside that we hadn't accessed. I think we're looking at almost \$10 million—nine point something—in terms of costs, and that's our projected cost. That's what I estimate it will take to deliver on this.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll move back to the government side.

Mr. Hiebert, you have five minutes.

Mr. Russ Hiebert (South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Paulson and Mr. Wex, for being with us.

To begin with, I want to dig down into the specifics of this civilian review and complaints commission. Can you give me some idea as to who would be on this commission? It's called civilian review and complaints, but are these current or former officers, or are these civilians who have had no exposure to the police force?

Mr. Richard Wex: I'll be happy to answer that question. In terms of who constitutes a member, the bill provides that information. No current or former member of the RCMP will qualify as a member of the commission. A member must be a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident. The member would be appointed by Governor in Council for a term of up to five years. That individual could be reappointed.

So no current or former RCMP member will serve as a member on the new commission.

● (1645)

Mr. Russ Hiebert: Okay. As I can tell, the civilian review and complaints commission deals with complaints, but there's this other category of serious incidents, injuries, or death.

Can you help me distinguish between those two? Where is the cut-off? What's a serious incident?

Mr. Richard Wex: Actually, it raises a very interesting question that causes a lot of confusion, and I've heard a little bit of it here this afternoon.

There are three things going on. You have a complaint from the public as a result of alleged misconduct or what have you—an incident that went a little south. An individual from the public who's not happy with how they were treated by an RCMP member can raise that with the RCMP. That's provided for in the old act. It's provided for in this new bill. If they're not happy, they can then bring that to the attention of the new civilian complaints body. That's for public complaints issues.

The other issue deals with internal discipline. Somebody conducts themselves in such a way that's contrary to the RCMP's code of conduct. That's dealt with by the RCMP. It's an internal disciplinary matter, and there are checks and balances, as the commissioner and the minister spoke to, if people are not happy with how that discipline is dealt with, including the External Review Committee and, ultimately, judicial review. But that's discipline. That's conduct that gives rise to discipline. The first case was conduct that gives rise to a public complaint.

The third category is the one you just identified, which is conduct that's a serious incident. It could give rise to serious injury or death, or undermine the integrity of the RCMP, and could give rise to a criminal investigation. Again, this bill deals with the issue of who's investigating the police in the context of a criminal investigation.

Now, it is true you could have one incident that gives rise to a public complaint, that gives rise to an internal disciplinary matter, and that also gives rise to a criminal investigation. It is rare, but it is possible, and there are different streams and institutions to deal with all these things. This bill addresses all these issues.

To answer your question on a serious incident, a serious incident is defined as death, a serious injury that will be prescribed by regulation, but it includes both physical and psychological—someone can be shot or hospitalized. Or a serious incident could be something that the commissioner, the minister, or a provincial minister responsible for the RCMP in a contract jurisdiction considers something that attracts the public interest. It's a sensitive matter that undermines the integrity of the RCMP.

In all those cases, this bill imposes a statutory obligation that starts with the RCMP having an obligation to refer the matter to a civilian investigative body, if one exists, that's established in a province to investigate the RCMP. There are other requirements in the case where such a body does not exist.

Mr. Russ Hiebert: Can you explain...?

The Chair: Very quickly.

Mr. Russ Hiebert: Can you explain briefly what that civilian investigative body would look like? I'm from British Columbia. Can you give me an example from my province?

Mr. Richard Wex: Yes, thank you.

It's interesting. Over the past five years, there has been a blossoming, if you will, of these civilian investigative bodies across the country. Most recently in British Columbia, the IIO, the Independent Investigation Office, has been established. Alberta has one. Manitoba recently introduced legislation. Ontario has had one for a number of years. Quebec recently, prior to the new government, had introduced new legislation, and Nova Scotia recently established

a serious incident investigative body, led by a civilian, to investigate the police.

In British Columbia, if there's a serious incident, the RCMP has an obligation to inform the province, and the province would refer that investigation to the new IIO.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll move to Mr. Hawn.

• (1650)

Hon. Laurie Hawn: I'd like to pick up on what we just talked about, because it left me a little bit confused. We have the new Civilian Review and Complaints Commission, on which no RCMP officers current or past will serve.

What kind of experience would they be looking for? Who would typically serve on that kind of body?

Mr. Richard Wex: There's a Governor in Council appointee, so there's a process that's established. It's available on the Privy Council website, which says how it's run. Presumably it would be somebody with a background in criminology, law, or policing.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: It could be a former police officer from some other force.

Mr. Richard Wex: It could be a former police officer from another police service, yes.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: What confused me was that you talked about these other provincial bodies that have sprung up. I guess it left me unclear as to who would deal with these complaints, a provincial body or the new CRCC.

Mr. Richard Wex: I'm not surprised about the confusion. Life's a little complicated, and this is particularly complicated.

If it's a public complaint, if it's a complaint from an individual who is not happy with how he's been treated by the RCMP, he would register his complaint at first instance, as is the case now, with the RCMP. There's informal conflict resolution that could be applied. At the end of the day, after the review by the RCMP, if this individual from the public is still not happy with how the complaint has been resolved, he can refer the matter to the new body, this independent Civilian Review and Complaints Commission. Then that body will exercise its new powers and new mandate to get to the bottom of the matter and provide recommendations to the commissioner about how it should be disposed of.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: You couldn't have one of these provincial bodies and the CRCC investigating the same incident.

Mr. Richard Wex: You could, in fact. Policing is becoming increasingly integrated. There's a lot of cooperation between the RCMP and other police services. In the event that there is a complaint dealing with one of these integrated operations, rather than having two complaint investigations going on by a provincial body and the new CRCC, this bill will for the first time allow for joint investigations. This is to reduce the redundancy in investigations—witnesses testifying twice, and so on. It is one of the requests the provinces and territories had of us. This is in the context only of public complaints.

In the context of criminal investigations, it will be the provincial civilian investigative body that will, at first instance, review. If they're not available, it will be referred to another police service of jurisdiction in that province. Only as a matter of last resort, where neither the civilian investigative body nor another police service is available, will the RCMP investigate itself. There are provisions to deal with that, including the possibility of appointing independent observers to report on the impartiality of the investigation.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: You're talking about trying to combine the previous streams, and that's laudable. With all that we have just talked about, do you see any potential for territoriality between the CRCC and one of these provincial organizations? You say they could do a combined investigation. That means a few members from the CRCC and a few members from the provincial one would get together to form an ad hoc body. How does that work?

Commr Bob Paulson: Let me give you a quick illustration. In the G-8/G-20, we had the CPC doing an investigation of our engagement there, and then we had the Ontario review/complaints body doing a similar investigation. Because we had an integrated plan to respond to the G-8/G-20, there was all sorts of crossover.

All of those review bodies agree that they need the opportunity to integrate their review mechanisms the same way we have integrated our operations. So I don't suspect you're going to see any territoriality.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Obviously, it could still take a while to work out the kinks, but you're satisfied it will address....

Commr Bob Paulson: If I can express a little self-interest here, the RCMP needs to be recognized for having always been open to review. I don't know why we've worn the assumption that police have investigated themselves. That's not our preference. We want to have other people investigate us. The more the merrier.

• (1655)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Commissioner.

We'll now move back to Monsieur Rousseau.

[Translation]

Mr. Rousseau, you have five minutes.

Mr. Jean Rousseau (Compton—Stanstead, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In his brief, Mr. Toews said:

To increase human resource efficiencies, the proposed legislation provides a mechanism through which Treasury Board may convert current civilian members to public service employees, thus reducing the number of categories of employees by one.

Therefore, you want to merge three categories into two, with a workforce of about 25,000 employees. In terms of human resources management, the trend is to have a few more groups in order to have better oversight over the workforce as a whole, with audits and controls in strategic areas.

What were the reasons for your decision?

Commr Bob Paulson: Greater efficiency was the main driver. There are three systems for three categories of employees.

[English]

There's no provision in the current RCMP Act for even the category of civilian employee. It's important to understand the evolution of that category of employee, because in many cases they are doing the jobs that public service employees are doing, and there has been a little bit of disarray in our HR approach to managing that category of employee.

The idea is that it'll be much more efficient to manage two categories of employees, that the opportunities for growth and advancement for civilian members will be enlarged considerably by having access to the breadth and scope of the public service, and that we will be able to form a more cohesive team approach. Frankly, if it were up to me, I'd have one category of employee, and that would be RCMP employees. That's really where we want to end up.

I think there are opportunities for efficiencies and streamlining our HR processes, so that's why.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean Rousseau: Are you not concerned that this measure will lead to problems with the recognition of employees' seniority and skills? A fair bit of work will be required to sort this all out. How long do you expect it will take to complete this task?

Commr Bob Paulson: I believe it will take one year. We have to consult employees. We have to ensure that there is a fair allocation of the benefits to which they are currently entitled. We have to review the mechanisms with Treasury Board to keep

[English]

the current slate of benefits they have right now. We need to have a system to translate the category of employee; it won't just simply be "boom, you're in the public service". It's going to be a negotiated consultative process to recognize those—

Mr. Jean Rousseau: A lot of mediation, too, I suppose—

Commr Bob Paulson: Yes.

Mr. Jean Rousseau: —and a lot of jobs for human resources management.

[Translation]

With respect to human resources management, I would also like to address the quality of labour relations in view of the fact that the bill gives the Commissioner the final word on hiring and firing. He will also have the right to make the final decision in appeal applications. How will this appeal mechanism work in the new disciplinary process? Will all human resources managers observe an unwritten rule, that is, the gradation of disciplinary sanctions, which is recognized by the various labour tribunals?

[English]

Commr Bob Paulson: First, the authorities that are proposed for the commissioner here are not authorities that aren't available to existing deputy ministers within the public service. It's not like I'm getting any sort of big, spectacular enhancement of powers.

Now, that said, it's important to understand that appeals and grievances will still be available to employees, and that in cases where we are seeking dismissal of employees—not just in dismissals, but in other cases—they'll have the opportunity to seek the External Review Committee's review of the circumstances. We have all sorts of labour laws that we have to be held to account on, and while ultimately it's my decision, it'll be informed by all of that analysis. Ultimately, if there is a continued dispute, we will go to the Federal Court.

It's important, though, to be fair and inclusive. What will change now is that in instances where there is a properly arrived at decision to dismiss a member, then the pay of that member will cease. Right now, the process is one where, if a grievance is launched, if an appeal is launched, the member is kept on the books. In some cases recently, it was for seven years.

I don't think Canadians are interested in seeing that, so that will change here. But the appeal process, the due process, and the means of grieving decisions will remain, and members will be represented.

• (1700)

The Chair: Thank you.

We will now go to Mr. Payne, and then over to Mr. Scarpaleggia.

Mr. Payne.

Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Commissioner and Mr. Wex for coming.

Commissioner, you did talk about your code of conduct, workplace behaviours, and certainly that you need to make some cultural changes. I'm wondering what your process is going to be for all of that. Can you give us more information on the code of conduct and the change to culture? How do you see that happening, and how long do you think it will take to get it done?

Commr Bob Paulson: The process will be one, as I have said a couple of times today, where we are going to want our front-line supervisors and managers to deal with the lion's share of conduct-related matters. That will require some training and it will require a different sort of approach than we have right now. I think that will take between six months to a year to achieve. Of course, coming into force, we'll be living the act when and if it happens, but we need to train our members to do that.

The benefit there, and how I extrapolate it to the cultural change that will occur, is that rather than seeing the organization and seeing senior managers as some sort of distant rulers of a kingdom who make decisions that are detached from the realities of current policing, the supervisors and managers will be making those decisions. There will be much more of a team approach on the ground for regulating conduct, especially in those instances where we are not seeking dismissal. We don't want to be off in some protracted legal hearing about whether or not we should take two days of pay or three days of pay from a member.

In a nutshell, that is how I think we will extract the cultural benefit for the organization, but we will also make sure that members see the organization attending.... We're going to make mistakes. Police work is very difficult. It's dangerous, it's stressful. We expect our members

to make mistakes. I expect my supervisors to help them get over those mistakes, set them right, and keep going.

Mr. LaVar Payne: Can you speak to the accountability and transparency of the process?

Commr Bob Paulson: With respect to discipline cases, what would happen in an ordinary, run-of-the-mill discipline case under this new legislation would be that a supervisor, apprised of conduct that he suspects contravenes the code of conduct, would assemble whatever material he needs to inform himself or herself of the contravention. They would have the member come into a meeting with him or her. The member could have their staff representative, the association member—it's the wrong word, but the SRR—come with him, or any other person could accompany the member to that meeting, where they would have a discussion around remedial steps that need to be taken. Discipline would be administered there. If it were a reprimand, it would be administered. If it were a day's pay, it would be administered. The member could object. Maybe there would be circumstances the member would want to put forward. All of that would be documented. The decision would be there. If the member wanted to appeal that, he could do so to a line officer, and off we go.

Mr. LaVar Payne: Thank you.

Mr. Wex, I wanted to go back to the new complaints commission. My first question is, how many members will there be, and will they all be full time?

Mr. Richard Wex: I will have to check the actual bill, but my recollection is that there is a chair, a vice-chair, and up to three other members. The chair is full time and the other members can be part time.

Subject to confirming with the bill, which I will do when the next question likely goes to the commissioner, I will take a look and confirm that.

• (1705)

Mr. LaVar Payne: Okay. Can you maybe speak to the enhanced investigative powers, that they have access to records? Are there any records they may not be able to have access to?

Mr. Richard Wex: One of the major drivers for enhancing the civilian review body was to strengthen its powers and broaden its mandate. There were three main areas, as I mentioned earlier, at a high level.

The first is to have much greater access to information. One of the criticisms of the current review body has been that it simply doesn't have access to all of the records that it felt it needed to, to get to the bottom of the matter. While the wording of the act was appropriate when it was drafted some 25 years ago, subsequent reviews had given the body greater access. So greater access to information, greater investigative powers—the body will now have the ability to summons individuals, force them to appear, and compel them to provide evidence in testimony, which in the past was not the case, and therefore, again, they weren't able to get access to all the evidence they needed.

The last point, Mr. Chair—

The Chair: Very quickly.

Mr. Richard Wex: The last point is that, importantly, the new body will be able to expand its mandate to conduct policy reviews, not only deal with complaints, but undertake policy reviews. This was a major recommendation of a number of reports, similar to the member's question with respect to SIRC.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Wex.

We'll go back to Mr. Scarpaleggia, please.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: If officers are dismissed, they can go through the courts, I guess, like any other Canadian who's dismissed from a position?

Commr Bob Paulson: Yes. Before that, though, they would have a path through our External Review Committee.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Right.

If I understand it, when a matter is referred to provincial jurisdiction for investigation, it's only as a last resort that a police force in that jurisdiction can investigate the matter if the civilian body in that jurisdiction....

It's interesting to note, though, that the minister was not always of the view that civilian bodies should be investigating serious incidents. As a matter of fact, in an appearance before this committee in March 2010—and this is just for the record, Chair, because I know the minister is not here—he said police should investigate police, because sometimes they're the ones with the expertise to investigate.

Obviously, the government doesn't buy that anymore. I would suggest that you would not agree with that statement.

Mr. Richard Wex: Maybe I can simply add I don't know the context within which that was said. It could very well have been said "in the absence of", because there are cases where there are no civilian investigative bodies available to do the investigation. In those cases, the next best thing is a police service. You definitely want someone who has major crime or investigative capacity to investigate the serious incident. It may have been in that context, I'm not sure.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: No, actually, it wasn't. He said the new body for civilian oversight of the RCMP that he, the minister, intends to establish will not be charged with investigating allegations of serious injuries or death involving RCMP.

Mr. Richard Wex: Oh, yes, that is true. The new civilian review body is only dealing with public complaints. It is not dealing with criminal investigations. It is the provinces, under the administration of justice, that are responsible for policing—

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: But I think you get my point.

Mr. Richard Wex: I was just trying to clarify.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Two years ago it was okay for police to investigate police.

Now we've been talking a lot about sexual harassment and other kinds of harassment, but there have been other instances of misconduct or lack of judgment that have made the headlines in the last few years, and they have been quite damaging to the reputation of the force. Of course, the Maher Arar case is one in

point. Obtaining a warrant to enter *Ottawa Citizen* reporter Juliet O'Neill's home was a lack of judgment, or something to that effect.

Will these new mechanisms change the culture enough to prevent these kinds of incidents from happening again, or are these what you referred to earlier as "accidents will happen, mistakes will be made" kinds of situations?

• (1710)

Commr Bob Paulson: No, as I said, I think this proposed legislation will go a long way to help me in building a culture of managers who have to manage and police officers who have to do police work. I think the responsibility around those judgment issues that you've described falls squarely on my shoulders.

I am engaged in changing how the organization views accountability and leadership. Those two principles have been my priority since my appointment. We have succeeded in a number of big, complex, public interest-style investigations lately, and I feel good about how that's going.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: We know that intelligence gathering and the investigation of matters that can have international implications is a very complex world. Justice O'Connor, in response to that, recommended the creation of an integrated national security review coordinating committee whose members would be the chair of the new entity recommended for reviewing RCMP activities, the chair of SIRC, and the CSC commissioner.

Are there any plans to establish that kind of coordinating committee? I know the government didn't really want to establish a security czar, a national security adviser in the Prime Minister's office. Does that unwillingness extend to not creating that kind of coordinating committee?

The Chair: You have about 30 seconds.

Mr. Richard Wex: Mr. Chair, I would simply say that it's a question better posed to the government.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: That's fair enough.

Mr. Richard Wex: What this bill does is strengthen the accountability structures with respect to the RCMP.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll now move back to Madame Doré Lefebvre.

[Translation]

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

Mr. Wex, I would quickly like to go back to something you said earlier. You mentioned that if a provincial body had to investigate the RCMP, but was not available—which is very rare—the RCMP would investigate itself.

Do you think that this shortcoming is also found in Bill C-42? Do you believe that public confidence would be undermined by the knowledge that a body not independent of the RCMP could carry out such investigations, even though it would only happen very rarely?

[English]

Mr. Richard Wex: If the commissioner had his preference, I think as he indicated it would always be a civilian investigative body or another police service that would investigate the RCMP, not because there is actual bias, frankly, based on the reviews that have been conducted from the CPC, who have done a review of police investigating police, but more because, as you've pointed out, there's always this perception.

The reality is that there are only so many investigative bodies or other police services that will have the capacity to undertake such reviews. It is foreseeable that there will be circumstances in which the only police of jurisdiction available that has the capacity to conduct the investigation in a timely way will be the RCMP. That said, because that is not ideal, this bill provides for mitigating measures, if you will, which includes the appointment of independent observers of the investigation, and other safeguards as well.

So even when the RCMP has to investigate itself—it may be geographically isolated, or there may be no other police service or investigative body to contain the scene—there will be safeguards put in place under the statutory regime, including the possibility of appointing independent observers, either by the province or by the new civilian review commission.

I don't know if the commissioner would like to add anything to that.

Commr Bob Paulson: I think it's important to understand that it is our practice now. We have a policy that very closely resembles this new legislation, in terms of declaring that we don't want to investigate ourselves.

So to the extent that the provinces, territories, or others can create these independent investigative bodies, we will always defer and refer our cases to them.

• (1715)

[Translation]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: Mr. Wex, did you say that it was possible to have independent observers or that there would always be independent observers if the RCMP were conducting the investigation? Could you please clarify that?

[English]

Mr. Richard Wex: No, no, I did not mean to say that.

What I did mean to say is that the bill provides authority for a province or the new complaints and review body to appoint an independent observer to make observations about the impartiality of the investigation, should the RCMP or, frankly, any other police service other than a civilian investigative body investigate a serious incident.

One other point I would identify based on your question is that it is true that there are some jurisdictions that do not yet have civilian investigative bodies, which I think underlines one of the concerns you have.

First, it's interesting to note just how many new bodies have been developed over the past five years.

Second, even in those jurisdictions—and the member mentioned Yukon. Yukon has a relationship with Alberta through which they will refer the investigation to the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team.

Increasingly, we're seeing either one-offs or standing arrangements between jurisdictions that have these bodies and other jurisdictions that have yet to build one up, or, frankly, don't have the need to, and they will pay for or enter into an arrangement with a jurisdiction that does.

[Translation]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll now move back to Mr. Leef, please.

Mr. Ryan Leef: Commissioner, you spoke about streamlining discipline. We'll move back to that briefly.

A lot of times when we talk about the RCMP we get this image of just a huge organization. Of course, it's the sum of its parts, and in some locations in this country those parts are very small.

I've travelled around the Yukon this whole summer talking to detachment commanders, some of varying ranks. Some detachments are run by sergeants, some by corporals. They express gratitude for this in terms of being able to deal with discipline at the lowest possible level. I've heard a number of stories where a discipline issue might arise, and because it can't be resolved in a timely fashion, a member needs to be transferred out of the detachment at tremendous cost, simply because there is no mechanism to resolve it, although it probably could have been resolved under this new legislation.

We have a cost factor there, but we also have detachment commanders now being very happy that they're able to deal with these things at the lowest possible level, and they think they can move forward without incurring those costs, without incurring bad feelings and ill will. Conversely, now, you might have some concern for members saying, "Okay, now I might be subjected to a very close relationship and discipline in that area".

What strategies do you see you're going to be able to employ to ensure that consistency in the discipline process across some very rural, small, urban-style detachments across a very large country?

Commr Bob Paulson: Thank you for that question.

There are some things that we will do, and in fact are doing. One thing is recognizing that the nine-point-something million dollars that we talked about is going to training all of these detachment commanders and supervisors in the requirements for administering the conduct regime that we're talking about.

The other thing we've done is we've implemented a conduct reporting system that allows for the conduct authority in each division to monitor and review what's going on, plus we have the existing chain of command that will review and monitor the application of the conduct regime. Members will continue to have access to the SRR program, their representatives—to participate in that. I have a relationship with the executive of the program, who are not at all shy about raising shortcomings that they see, that they have reported up through their system, in the various initiatives that we have in the organization.

I think you raise a good concern, and one that we've anticipated in terms of changing behaviours, to the point where supervisors are going to be administering this and they will have to create records of how they engage with their members, and so on, so that those can be reviewed.

We're alive to that concern, but I think with everybody pitching in, it should go smoothly.

● (1720)

Mr. Ryan Leef: All right. Thank you.

Proposed subsection 20.2(1) of the bill says:

The Commissioner may

(a) determine the learning, training and development requirements of members and fix the terms on which the learning, training and development may be carried out;

Maybe you can just speak to us a bit about how important it is for you as a commissioner to be able to start some of this shift right in Regina, right at Depot. At what level will this act be introduced to the members taking training, so they understand this right at the very beginning of their careers?

Commr Bob Paulson: That's exactly right. We're blessed with a central training area, Depot, that we have all of our members go through. It's six months, but it's an action-packed six months. They do get exposed to a number of the major initiatives in the force. We also have field monitoring systems, once recruits are released from Depot out into the field, where they continue on a training regime.

This bill also calls for an enhanced probationary period for our members, to provide for the ability to modify their conduct and to engage them in the training regimes they need to engage in.

The other question that I think comes from having training laid down in the act like this is the need to be able to set standards for the force and the conduct of our members, and how we deliver policing services across this country.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll move now back to Ms. Ashton, please.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Thank you.

Commissioner, getting back to what is an issue that has gripped Canadians, that of sexual harassment...we're talking about the bill, and it's obviously an expansive bill that seeks to tackle a number of areas. We've talked about the gender-based audit.

I wonder what the RCMP's plan is to be able to, yes, deal with this culture in which harassment takes place, but also to send a strong signal to Canadians that it's happening. I have to say, a lot of what

we do in the House, or even in committee, is “inside baseball”, and Canadians have been shaken. Certainly there is a gender experience in that. Canadian women particularly want to see it, and we want to see a strong signal. Part of it is from your end, but I was also hoping that the minister's answer would have indicated a specific policy in this very area.

But I'd like to hear from you with respect to the RCMP: how can you send that signal to Canadians?

Commr Bob Paulson: I'm trying to send that signal to Canadians every day, by innovating our policies and practices with respect to gender, to not only come up to the industry standard in terms of how people in Canada, in the various workplaces that we have in Canada, are approaching gender-based issues, but to exceed it, to try to get... not to a point where we're talking about harassment all the time—although people want to be reassured that there are systems and processes available to them to access—but for a respectful workplace, and to create a culture in the organization where people respect one another.

In fact, the initiative that was covered recently in the media, in terms of my commanding officer in British Columbia, where a lot of these cases have come from...has embarked on a very ambitious proactive grassroots campaign of engaging the employees in establishing a modern, respectful workplace.

The proposed legislation is very important towards the success of this, but it's also just in the day-to-day operations of the organization, deploying and enforcing compliance with reasonable policies; that is what I'm doing.

Ms. Niki Ashton: To give you the support to do that, because we're talking about a comprehensive approach that is necessary, the issue of a culture that needs to be changed keeps coming up. This is a massive undertaking, and one would assume that specific funds ought to be allocated. We've heard about funds with respect to Bill C-42, but again, we've also heard about some of the challenges that the RCMP in general is having to deal with in terms of budgetary decisions.

When having to undertake this kind of huge initiative and having to send that signal to Canadians, and it's not just the words you're using, as commissioner, but that the work is happening all throughout, is there the money to back that up? Is there a commitment specifically around sexual harassment? I'm not speaking about the bill, but is there an understanding of the kinds of funds that are necessary?

That is my first question.

Secondly, are those funds available?

● (1725)

Commr Bob Paulson: The best way to answer that is to say that I don't see funding as an impediment to our fixing what we have to fix to address the cultural issues.

Since I've been commissioner, I've changed a lot of things in the organization. One of the things I've done is to change the way I interact with commanding officers, and how I create and deliver and demand accountability from my commanding officers on all of these things. I have weekly meetings with my commanding officers. They all directly report to me now. Formerly, they didn't do that, which is not to say that it turns on me, but it's just that tried and true systems of management and leadership and accountability are being applied very diligently these days in the RCMP, and they aren't impeded by the availability of funds.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Maybe as a follow-up...the question in terms of funding would be large-scale training, because here we're talking about abuse that's happening on the ground in detachments, not necessarily here in Ottawa or at Depot, for example. Is there the support for that kind of expansive training that is necessary to get into that question of culture?

Commr Bob Paulson: Yes, there is, and that turns on me, on the existing training budgets I have within this organization, on the content, and on the way they are delivered. We have a supervisory development course, a managers development course, an executives development course. All of those three training approaches have been modified to include what we're talking about here today.

So there's very little likelihood that anybody in this organization can say that they are not aware of the issues that—

Ms. Niki Ashton: Can I ask when that—

The Chair: No, you actually can't, unfortunately. I've already given you half a minute more than I should have.

It wouldn't be so bad, except I did have one little question myself that I would like to pose.

First of all, Commissioner, our time is pretty well drawing to a close. I know you are aware, and Deputy Minister Wex is aware, that this is the first day that this committee has been taken with the responsibility of dealing with this bill here, in committee. It has been in the House. It's been debated. All sides have said, "Let's get it to committee. Let's ask the right questions." And we want to do that.

I think Canadians, generally speaking, contrary to what you may have heard today, are optimistic with what they've seen, especially, Commissioner, with your approach from day one, where you named the issues, you named the culture, you named what you wanted to see accomplished in the short term, and perhaps even some in the longer term. Today you spoke about the culture that needs to be changed and that you want to see changed.

I think we're all a little optimistic that we're on the right road here. We just want to make sure that there aren't any idiosyncrasies that maybe we've missed as a committee.

You did make reference to Mr. Leef's question, and I guess I have a question: is there anything in this bill that you think would be a differential...or would be different as far as how complaints are dealt with in the rural compared with the urban?

We've talked about remote. I think in one answer, Mr. Wex, you said that, well, in some rural areas, they may not have the resources, or they may not.... But when we're dealing with complaints, a complaint is a complaint.

I live in a rural riding, in fact, where we have sometimes concerns that we don't see the dollars trickling down to some of our rural detachments that we'd like to have. I have one where a detachment building—and this is mainly provincial—was deemed unfit. You know, it's just hard to see some of those things responded to.

Is there anything here that maybe the rural or remote areas, such as the Yukon, need to be concerned with?

Commr Bob Paulson: Thank you, Chair.

I don't know that they need to be concerned with.... I think they need to be similarly optimistic, because I think the idea of empowering our supervisors at the detachment level to take care of business, as it were, in terms of managing the conduct of their employees goes a long way to getting the rest of the organization... which sometimes can be seen as an impediment to moving things along, certainly in conflict management.

So I guess the short answer is, no, I don't see any problems there.

• (1730)

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

I see that our time is up.

We want to thank both of you for appearing on this day one. As we tell all those who appear as witnesses before committee, if there is something you would like to add to any of the testimony you've given verbally, please feel free to send a letter or to send whatever into the staff here.

We are adjourned.

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