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Chair

Mr. Kevin Sorenson

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•(0845)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC)): Good morning, everyone. This is meeting number 84 of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. It is Thursday, May 2, 2013.

I'll remind you that in our second hour today we will be going in camera. We will be discussing some of the future things that our committee is going to be doing after the break. But in our first hour we're continuing our study of the economics of policing in Canada.

Who was it who coined the phrase “déjà vu all over again”? We're pleased to have with us again, Deputy Commissioner Doug Lang, with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, contract and aboriginal policing; and also Inspector Tyler Bates. Let me just explain that the last time they appeared the topic of aboriginal policing was more the focus. Today I think we're looking more at the topic of auxiliary policing, and maybe some of the volunteering as well.

Our committee wants to thank you for being here last time and coming back again today. We invite Commissioner Lang to bring us an opening statement again today. You know the exercise here. There will be some questions afterward.

The floor is yours.

Deputy Commissioner Doug Lang (Deputy Commissioner, Contract and Aboriginal Policing, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

In fact we had so much fun the last time that we could hardly wait to come back.

The Chair: You had to come back.

D/Commr Doug Lang: On the way home Tyler said that I didn't give him enough time to talk, so I'm going to turn over the opening statement to him. The auxiliary program is within his bailiwick of responsibilities in the national aboriginal policing services program.

I'll turn it over to Tyler for the opening comments, and we'll be happy to answer any questions the committee has after that.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Commissioner.

Inspector Tyler Bates (Director, National Aboriginal Policing and Crime Prevention Services, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): My apologies for the late submission of the redraft. A number of topics that were in the initial version went out. We had some reworking to do on that.

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairperson and honourable members of the committee. My name is Tyler Bates. I'm the RCMP's director of aboriginal policing and crime prevention services. I thank you for inviting me to discuss the RCMP's auxiliary constable program, one of the volunteer programs that serve to enhance the RCMP's service delivery.

As mentioned at the last appearance before the committee, on April 30, the RCMP has 29,000 employees that are complemented by thousands of volunteers, the largest group of volunteers in the Canadian federal government. The use of volunteers enhances police efficiency, responsiveness, and service delivery, which in turn leads to community engagement and increased effectiveness of the RCMP as a police agency.

The contingent of volunteers within the auxiliary force numbers over 2,000, and they provide over 250,000 hours of volunteer services every year. Typically, auxiliary constables are gainfully employed within their communities. Each division has a minimum requirement for volunteer hours, which averages about 192 annually. These are weekend warriors who want to work with the police and are community members who have other gainful employment and who join us and give us a community perspective on some of the issues in our communities. Auxiliary constables receive anywhere from one to three weeks of basic training. That includes training in first aid, CPR, CBRN, the RCMP incident management intervention model, and occupational health and safety, as well as public and police safety courses, which include baton and pepper-spray training.

Though their presence is an enhancement to service delivery, they are not a replacement and cannot perform core policing functions as they do not have tactical or investigative training for enforcement or for investigational support of regular members of the RCMP. They're specially trained volunteers, but they're not armed with a firearm. Their training enables them to perform a number of authorized activities under the direct supervision of a regular member, including school presentations, proactive foot and bike patrols, coordination of neighbourhood and business watch programs, home and business safety checks, and block parent programs, to mention but a few.

The auxiliary program is funded and resource levels are determined by the contract provinces, territories, and municipalities, and the program is administered by the RCMP. The coordination of their recruitment and training requires several subject matter experts, and any augmentation to the base of auxiliary constables is managed at the division level. Recruiting and training auxiliary constables depends on available resources, and outfitting each with a uniform and the required equipment costs approximately \$2,600.

The RCMP is unique in that our members work in a diversity of communities over the course of their careers. They are required to flexibly adapt to the distinct characteristics of urban, rural, remote, and aboriginal policing environments. This diversity is advantageous to their development and contributes to a well-rounded police officer. That said, the mobility of our membership can sometimes have a negative impact on the transfer of community knowledge and the integration of new members into a new community. The presence of auxiliary constables within a detachment bridges this gap and facilitates a regular member's transition as well as that knowledge transfer. It's often the auxiliary constables who educate incoming members concerning crime trends, long-standing conflicts, and the historical context of community life, thereby enabling proactive police and community engagement.

Auxiliary constables provide valuable insight into the fabric of community life through their knowledge of their home community, local culture, and language. They facilitate the integration of incoming regular members into community life, and they complement our regular members, permitting them to focus on core policing duties.

Furthermore, auxiliary constables enhance the cultural competence of the RCMP, aligning police service delivery with the priorities of the communities they serve. Community representation in the RCMP via the auxiliary constable program builds trust and communication between the police and community, and serves as a bridge between the RCMP and our clients through increased community engagement and participation in crime prevention priorities.

In summary, the auxiliary constable program provides cultural and community knowledge that enables the RCMP to tailor our service in a manner that is respectful of community values. Though the auxiliary constable program enhances our service delivery, it would be difficult to surmise that there are significant realizations of cost savings as their activities are all supervised by a regular member of the RCMP. This, however, does not minimize the valuable contributions that are made daily to the well-being of our communities across Canada by the RCMP's complement of auxiliary constables.

● (0850)

Ladies and gentlemen, I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll move into the first round of questioning. It's a seven-minute round.

We'll go to Mr. Norlock, please.

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

I thought your appearance here today was maybe because you got the short straw, but anyway....

All joking aside, in the dying days of my previous career I was the program manager in Northumberland detachment. One of the programs I brought in, which was already in existence in other places, was the auxiliary program, because as I suspect you did, I thought it was a cost-effective way of supplementing some community needs, and more than just one.

Number one in the community needs were that we had a lot of parades—a Christmas parade, Canada Day parade, etc.—and the fire department was stretched thinly. We also had a group of young men and women who wanted to become more involved in their community from a policing aspect, so we thought the auxiliary unit was....

I looked at your numbers in the RCMP and I gather that those numbers of volunteer hours.... We had the Commissioner of the OPP here and I think his numbers were significant. I wonder if you contemplated expanding the auxiliary program?

I'm going to give you time to flesh that out.

The second part is, I also did first nation policing on the James Bay and Hudson Bay coast and I noticed that in those communities they had people like peacekeepers, and we had first nation constables. It was a different kind of policing, and of course we had the Nishnawbe-Aski police chief here telling us about how the force has transitioned to a different type of policing. But it seemed at that time to have been effective.

I wonder, in your first nation territories, do you have people like peacekeepers who are essentially volunteers in the community who to a lesser extent or to a greater extent help with bylaw enforcement?

I know that even the judge, when he went up to the first nation territories, because it was a dry reserve they looked into his velvet bag and his robes to see if he was bringing in something he shouldn't have. Although at first I know some of us thought this was kind of, wow, but in the end they just wanted to make everybody equal.

I wonder if you could let us know some of your thoughts in regard to those two things.

● (0855)

Insp Tyler Bates: With respect to your first question on the expansion of the auxiliary constable program, we're certainly always looking within our communities for interest in that program, and in expanding that program where it makes sense. The costs are minimal. Certainly there are some training aspects that need to be considered and coordinated, but we are always looking to expand that program.

With a \$2,600 cost for outfitting an auxiliary, it's not a significant consideration in terms of the expansion of that program. We're always looking for those opportunities, and we do so. It's a challenge because there is a minimum requirement of hours that an auxiliary has to work, as I mentioned it's between 100 and 192 hours a year, so that's in essence one eight-hour shift and in some provinces two shifts a month. So at times it's a challenge to find people, but we do look for expansion opportunities.

As far as working with peacekeepers—a variety of security agencies, band constable programs—is concerned there are a number of different entities that are in existence that we work with and collaborate with, with respect to the safety of remote communities. The challenge is the same. With our auxiliary constable program everything they do is very well supervised because we don't want to expose our volunteers to any undue risk. We're ultimately responsible for them and when they hop into our police vehicle for a shift, we're mindful of the fact that they don't have the same intervention tools that we have. They have some basic training and we're mindful of what we expose them to.

On a routine shift, a constable working the beat who has a call to attend to a domestic violence complaint would not likely take an auxiliary constable. The auxiliary constable would be dropped off at the detachment.

That said, if the constable has a talk he or she would like to do at a school, or as you mentioned there is a parade that requires some participation and the constable is tied up with a number of other things, the auxiliary constable enhances the service that we provide in communities by attending to some of those functions that we might not ever have the opportunity to attend, just because of our reactive responsibilities and our core policing responsibilities.

Mr. Rick Norlock: Thank you.

Do I have another couple of minutes?

The Chair: You have two minutes.

Mr. Rick Norlock: How does community-based policing fit into your model? In your various detachments, do you have community policing committees of people who volunteer from the community to give you feedback from the grassroots level?

The example I like to use is that police always like to look at their clearance rate as the most important thing. People are going to look at clearance rates, but in actual fact, sometimes people just want to see Officer Mary or Officer Joe walking down the street or patrolling the township road where they live, so that they can visibly see their taxpayers' dollars at work. I wonder if you could comment on that.

Insp Tyler Bates: It depends on the manner in which the community wants to engage the police. A number of communities have community consultative groups of volunteers and professionals from the community. They're a body within the community that meets with the police to establish community policing priorities.

In some communities, that particular process is done through the elected political representatives. It's part of the annual performance plan process. The detachment commander meets with the elected body of officials and has those same discussions that you'd have with the community consultative group about what the issues are in the community and what they would like to see the police focus on. In

seeking that input, we're very mindful of not defining for the community what their problems are. If the concern is speeding at 3:30 when school closes, then we'll be mindful of a proactive program to address that particular community concern.

We do seek that feedback. Detachment commanders are required to have those consultations and to have an annual performance plan with measures that are established at the outset of that particular year to deal with those community issues that are identified.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll move to the opposition and to Mr. Garrison, please.

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

Thank you for coming back to be with us again today.

Just to be clear in my understanding of auxiliaries, I think the auxiliaries are all operating under contract policing, right? So—

● (0900)

Insp Tyler Bates: That's correct.

Mr. Randall Garrison: —are there federal ones as well? Yes?

D/Commr Doug Lang: I know of one. When I was the criminal operations officer in Winnipeg for D Division in the province of Manitoba, we had one that was involved with our commercial crime and financial crime group and that wanted to come in on weekends and help them work through sticky files and those kinds of things. That's the only one that I know of personally.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Okay.

In your opening statement, you talked about increased community knowledge. I'm going to go back to some experience that I've had with policing. We had a community police station that was opened as a kind of an experiment, and what we found was that we did not get a diversity of volunteers that reflected the community we were in. We got a certain segment of people who wished to volunteer, and they were good volunteers, but they didn't actually reflect the community that we were volunteering in.

I just wonder about the diversity of your auxiliary members in terms of gender and then perhaps in terms of participation in the program from others such as first nations and other ethnic communities.

Insp Tyler Bates: I can only speak to my experience, and I have worked in a diversity of communities. I've worked with male and female auxiliaries, and with auxiliaries of a variety of ethnicities, including aboriginal auxiliary constables. We are constantly trying to drum up the interest in the auxiliary program. It's a significant commitment for volunteers, but that said, it's invaluable.

I can remember working at my first detachment. I was headed out the door for a call for service that related to a trespassing complaint about cows that had gone into somebody else's pasture. That was the nature of the complaint, so seemingly that's not a significant complaint to concern yourself with. The auxiliary caught me before I was going out the door and asked me if I realized that there was a decade of conflict between those two neighbours and that there had been volatile conflict that had involved assaultive behaviour.

What seemed like a really innocuous and non-threatening call very quickly became a call that three armed police officers went to, because of the level of violence that had escalated between those two neighbours. That's the value that auxiliaries provide in terms of public and police safety. I learned very quickly that the first person I sought out at the detachment was that long-standing community member who was an auxiliary and had the knowledge of where those historical conflicts were and what the history of that community was.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Thank you, and I couldn't agree with you more that this kind of knowledge information is very important.

I'll go back to the question of diversity. I know you may not have figures available with you today, but if you do go away today and find you have any figures on that, it would be useful. Yes, anecdotally, I know all of us know diverse members have been auxiliaries, but I still suspect overall that we may not have as representative a group in the auxiliaries and therefore not as much community knowledge as we could have in that group.

I want to talk about the question of training. In your opening statement you talked about one to three weeks of basic training. Can you talk a little more about why that varies so much? It's a very large difference.

Insp Tyler Bates: It really depends on the nature of the duties that are defined by the division. There is some variance in terms of the tasks that are assigned to the auxiliaries, depending on these service delivery requirements in each division. If the interest is in having an auxiliary do crime prevention talks in the schools and that's the extent of their responsibilities, then they would probably receive far less training than if they're on patrol side by side with regular members of the RCMP, responding to low-level complaints. There they would require additional training with respect to the use of some intervention tools to protect themselves, and whatnot.

So there is a variance in terms of the nature of their duties depending on the province, and that determines the level of training that's required for each auxiliary.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Again, just drawing on some of my own past experience, one of the problems we ran into with volunteers is their understanding of their roles and responsibilities. So is there any standardized module that they all go through? What would that make up?

Insp Tyler Bates: There's a national policy that certainly provides parameters as to what they can engage with and what they can't. It is stipulated that all of their activities have to be under the supervision of a regular member of the RCMP. That is something our field members are mindful of. They're responsible for that auxiliary and we do have to be very mindful that we're not exposing them to situations that could cause them harm.

● (0905)

Mr. Randall Garrison: Is there a standard training module that the volunteers themselves go through that would make them aware of the kinds of limits on what they're doing?

Insp Tyler Bates: Yes, there are standard components. Certainly, the RCMP intervention management model guides how they're to respond to incidents where there is a physical intervention of some sort with a client. So there are components that are standard, the CPR course and whatnot. But as far as the totality of the training they

receive is concerned, it is very much determined by what they require for the functions and duties they're performing in their division.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Because most of them are done under contract, are provisions for auxiliaries written into the contract? Or is this something that's simply done on an ad hoc basis under contract policing?

Insp Tyler Bates: As far as the volunteer requirements and the requirements of their...is concerned, it's divisionally determined in terms of those requirements and that's why there's such variance. When I talked about the minimum hours of volunteering, it runs the gamut from 100 to 192 hours a year.

So each division has a divisional policy that contributes to the auxiliary function and the parameters of their duties as well.

D/Commr Doug Lang: Perhaps I could clarify that point as well.

The contract determines the number of full-time employees on the regular member and civilian member and public servant side. It doesn't speak to the number of auxiliaries. We are not so much free but it's available within the budget funded to us for O and M to hire as many auxiliaries as we could fit in a specific detachment. There's no quota, standard, or number that we have to live within. It's all based on consultation with the province or territory.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll go back to Ms. Bergen, please, for seven minutes.

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

Thank you again to both witnesses for being here today.

I'd like just a couple of details on how you organize and run the auxiliary program. Can you tell me if there is a standard procedure for how you recruit volunteers? Or does it change, depending on the community?

Insp Tyler Bates: I think we're proactive in educating the community with respect to the auxiliary constable program, whether it be via presentations in the community or just with local TV or radio, for that matter. We have a variety of recruitment methods, but in essence, people express an interest.

Oftentimes we have folks in the community who have an interest. I've had magistrates who acted as auxiliaries, and people from all walks of life. But we also get a stream of folks with an interest in law enforcement as a career, and this is their way of getting some exposure to the career and getting a bird's eye view as to whether it's something they want to continue on with in terms of their career ambitions.

Generally, people express the interest. They're aware of the program. In many communities it's a long-standing program where there's been a number of auxiliaries—folks they're aware of who have worked in the program—and they come to us with that interest.

Ms. Candice Bergen: One program that's very popular and quite successful in Manitoba, and for sure in Portage la Prairie in my riding, is Citizens on Patrol. I don't recall that there's actually a lot of discussion about auxiliary members because the Citizens on Patrol program seems to work very well with the RCMP. In fact, the RCMP will help them with their charity golf tournaments or different fundraisers, but there's no actual real cost to the RCMP.

I'm assuming you can probably tell me what the difference would be. Citizens on Patrol is probably separate. They go out on their own. They're the eyes and ears and they can give some assistance, which would be different from the auxiliary program, as far as going to schools and that kind of thing.

I wonder if you have any comments on the two programs. I know and recognize that there are other values that volunteers and an auxiliary program would bring to community involvement and some of those intangibles. When we're looking at efficiencies and when we write our report, with reference to value for money, do we want to be encouraging a continuation and expansion of an auxiliary program? Do we want to rather be encouraging an expansion of something like Citizens on Patrol where, again, they raise their own money and help? How would you compare and contrast the two in terms of value and also the costs?

• (0910)

Insp Tyler Bates: They're both invaluable programs.

I have first-hand experience with the Citizens on Patrol program in Selkirk, Manitoba, as well. There are different functions, but the Citizens on Patrol are the eyes and ears of the RCMP and have regular contact and communication with the RCMP as to potential or ongoing criminal activity. They're very helpful.

Certainly an expansion of that program has value, and it's been value-added everywhere I've worked with Citizens on Patrol. They're a non-uniformed presence and they're somewhat covert in their activities as far as how they conduct themselves. They have their own provincial coordinator. They do provide for some efficiencies in reporting ongoing criminal activity.

The auxiliary constable program is entirely different. It provides us with a knowledge base we wouldn't otherwise have and a comfort level in terms of resolving conflict in the most sensible, peaceful way. To have that knowledge base is invaluable as well.

My preference would be to have both programs in every community that I worked in, if there were that interest.

Ms. Candice Bergen: How much time do I have, Chair?

The Chair: You have two and a half minutes.

Ms. Candice Bergen: Okay, good. You can let me know if I run over.

I want to come back to something I asked the last time you were here. It had to do with policing on first nations. It's related to this, I believe. We were talking a little bit about the COR program or multi-agencies and how those take community involvement.

On first nation reserves where, again, it's much more complex with a much different way of life, it's very difficult sometimes to even just get basic involvement with parents going to parent-teacher day. As I recall, we used to have to have a contest. We'd say to the kids, "Whichever class has the most parents out for parent-teacher day will get a big pizza party." Otherwise, there didn't seem to be that knowledge, and there was a lack of involvement.

Is this something that, if built on, could actually be an even bigger contribution in terms of policing and community safety on reserves or in difficult areas, even in some rural areas where there are different challenges than in urban areas?

Yes, Mr. Lang, but you did take all of Mr. Bates' time last time.

D/Commr Doug Lang: Oh, I know—but I have a good answer for this one.

Voices: Oh, oh!

D/Commr Doug Lang: It ropes into the diversity question we had from the other side.

That was a very interesting comment. We see it as well. Our auxiliary program and our various volunteer programs attract different sort of persons to each. Tyler touched this morning on the fact that we have our weekend warrior types who want to be out with, and seen working with, the police. They love that. That's the little charge they get out of being in the auxiliary program. We have others who just want to help out in the community. They're the kind of volunteer who wants to volunteer for everything, right? They want to be seen as working with the police and being helpful with the police.

We have lots of other people in the community who don't want to be seen as overtly helping the police, because they get the, "Oh, you're one of them. You're ratting us out. You're telling stories about us. You're not very helpful. You're one of them, you're not one of us." We probably see that problem more in aboriginal communities than we do in other communities, because there is a bit of a divide between enforcing the law and doing what you want.

So it's hard for us, when we go into some of these communities, to attract that volunteer into certain areas. We probably have a better opportunity, in aboriginal communities, of engaging elders to become kind of quasi auxiliaries for us. They give us that link into the cultural traditions that we're missing, the stuff we need to know about that community. That's part of their engagement with us when we come in.

We have a big thing on cultural engagement with the Yukon right now, on having those kinds of groups, and making sure we have that community assimilation—for us, when we go into those communities, not them to us. When we go into the communities, we ask them to help us learn what we need to learn about them. So we try, in our proactive recruiting, to touch on all the diversity in the communities that we have. We try to find aboriginal women and visible minorities to be part of our auxiliary program. We then try to recruit from those people, as well.

It's kind of a three-step stage sometimes. We get a person to get their finger in volunteering, and we talk them into becoming an auxiliary. That gives us the opportunity to kind of test drive them on how they'd be as a police person, and then we get them into our recruiting process.

Then we have those others, the 45-year-old guy or the 40-year-old guy who just wants to come out and spend some time with the police on the weekend, helping us out.

Ms. Candice Bergen: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go to Mr. Scarpaleggia, please.

● (0915)

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

If you had to give us a sense of the distribution of age groups within an auxiliary force, if you will, would it be heavily weighted towards the young or towards older people? When I hear “auxiliaries”, my first thought is police cadets, but it's not that, it's....

Are there some young people—you could almost call them cadets—as well as people from other age groups who aren't necessarily looking for a career in policing but who just want to be involved, who want to help, who are community-minded, and so on?

Insp Tyler Bates: There are. There are young people who don't necessarily have an interest in a career in law enforcement but who just want to help and contribute to their community in that way. I don't have specific statistics with respect to the distribution of age group, but that's something I can look at to see if we can get a handle on it.

But it does run the gamut.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: It runs the gamut.

Insp Tyler Bates: Yes. I've worked with bankers, with folks who are retired, as well as with young folks who are just out of high school, for that matter, who are wanting to work with the police and contribute.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Do some of these younger auxiliary members choose a career in law enforcement, perhaps the RCMP or other police forces? Do you see that some go on to pursue a career?

D/Commr Doug Lang: Absolutely. In fact, first, as Tyler mentioned, just to touch on the longevity of some of our auxiliaries, we have some who've received 20-year pins for being on the auxiliary for 20 years. It's quite an achievement for a volunteer to do 180 hours' worth of volunteer work for us for 20 years. It's fantastic. We have others who come in the rotating door. So we try to find that balance of both. The person who's been around the community a

long time is of really great benefit to us, but there's that young person who comes in, too.

We don't have a formalized cadet program, as you called it. I know the City of Winnipeg has a cadet program. When you apply to be a police officer in Winnipeg and get on that list of applicants, they get you into their cadet program. Right from the get-go they have you start doing that type of cadet stuff as you move through.

We don't have that. In terms of our recruiting strategy and the controls in our recruiting program for regular members, we're required to recruit the members from each province and territory equivalent to the percentage of the RCMP. We have a target for the Yukon and we have a target for the north, all those kinds of things. We also take a lot of people from Ontario and Quebec, where we don't have members in uniformed detachments. It's tough to put those people through any kind of an auxiliary program.

I know in the west, particularly where I've served, in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Alberta, we use the auxiliary program as that step-in. Let's see what you're like, get a feel for your type of personality, and see whether this is what you want to do.

We can do it on summer student programs, which are very limited in duration, and some of these things. In the auxiliary program, you get somebody on a commitment, because the process to get through now is sometimes a year, sometimes longer, depending on what group you're from.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: I'm wondering if it wouldn't be useful for the RCMP, but also for the conclusions we will draw in our study, if the RCMP had statistics on how many auxiliary members eventually became full-fledged law enforcement officers. That becomes a good justification for the money spent on..., which as you say, is modest. It would be nice to have a systematic look at the contribution the auxiliaries make to policing, either by becoming police officers themselves later on, or what have you.

In terms of the role they have, you said something interesting, Inspector Bates. Maybe you were just giving an off-the-cuff example, but you said that if you had to respond to a domestic violence dispute, you would drop off the auxiliary at the detachment. Does that mean that you're...? First of all, you're travelling at different times with an auxiliary in your car. So the auxiliary doesn't just go to local fairs and provide some kind of supervision, and take part in some kind of annual parade. They're driving around with the police officers. I imagine that's the case in most cases.

● (0920)

Insp Tyler Bates: First, it depends on their level of training and which province you're in. That's certainly a consideration. Each individual call or function that you're having that auxiliary constable perform is a risk assessment that has to be undertaken. Certainly they are on regular preventive patrols with a full-fledged member of the RCMP in a variety of provinces throughout the country.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: If they were traveling with you or with an RCMP officer and all of a sudden the officer got a call to respond to a domestic dispute or a bank robbery or something, would you just...? Obviously you don't have time to drop off the person at the detachment. Would that person stay behind in the car? How does it work? Or would they maybe assist with radio communications or something while the officer did the front-line work?

Insp Tyler Bates: Potentially. You certainly have to be mindful of finding a safe function and a safe place for that auxiliary because as you pointed out, there might not always be the possibility of dropping off that auxiliary. Your risk can be minimized, but it can't be entirely eliminated. We are very mindful of creating the safest possible situation for the auxiliary, and manning the radio might be the function they operate.

The Chair: Thank you very much for that.

Just as an aside, can the auxiliary police officer drive the police car?

Insp Tyler Bates: No. They're not operating police cars. They accompany the regular member on preventive patrols and attend some calls for service.

The Chair: So even in a parade you wouldn't tell them to take the car and go?

D/Commr Doug Lang: Our policy states that auxiliary officers may operate police transport subject to the approval of the commanding officer, but they must not operate police transport under hazardous conditions. For example, a commanding officer can designate a certain auxiliary constable to take a car, usually an unmarked car or a slick car without lights, to do security in a parade or a school talk or that kind of thing.

I'm the same as Tyler. I've been in the car with auxiliaries and with summer students when I got involved in a high-speed pursuit or had to deal with an impaired driver all over the road. We pull over to the side of the road and tell them to get out, and out they get and wait for the next car to come by. It's happened because you cannot put them in the line of danger. But they can operate under certain conditions. We will put them....

I think you're talking about Alberta, where we have our retro cars. They will be driving the retro car in a parade rather than a....

The Chair: Because in my riding, at a lot of these parades in small towns, everybody wants the police there. They want the RCMP, with the lights going, to lead the parade. You have a police officer driving to a town, sometimes for half an hour, to lead a parade.

All right, sorry for that.

Madame Michaud, you have five minutes.

[Translation]

Ms. Éloïse Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was afraid that I was not going to have any more time.

Thank you for coming back to see us.

I would like to finish off this issue by asking you for a quick clarification. You said that you could require an auxiliary constable

to take some training before being able to accompany police officers in a patrol car. Can you tell us what kind of training that is?

[English]

Insp Tyler Bates: Again, it varies from province to province.

[Translation]

Ms. Éloïse Michaud: In general terms, what would the minimum training be?

[English]

Insp Tyler Bates: Okay, they all receive first aid and CPR training. They receive training on our intervention management model, so our use of force model is what that pertains to. They receive some health and safety training as well.

[Translation]

Ms. Éloïse Michaud: What I gathered from your presentation is that that is the basic training for all auxiliaries.

[English]

Insp Tyler Bates: Yes.

[Translation]

Ms. Éloïse Michaud: So the basic training is enough to let them get into a police car unless a province or territory has a specific requirement. Is that correct?

[English]

Insp Tyler Bates: Yes, it enables them to be in the company of a regular member, under the direct supervision of a regular member. Whether that's in a police car or whether it's in the office, for that matter, certainly the training they have enables them to have that place.

• (0925)

[Translation]

Ms. Éloïse Michaud: Thank you.

I would now like to go back to the questions raised by my colleague, Mr. Garrison. The questions deal with how representative the corps of auxiliary constables are.

Are special efforts made to recruit groups such as women? Do you have an idea of the percentage of women working as auxiliary constables? If it is difficult to provide an exact percentage, perhaps you could give us an approximate one.

D/Commr Doug Lang: At the moment, women represent about 23% of RCMP members. Our commissioner's goal is to bring that figure up to 30%, then to aim for 50% later. So we will have to make changes to our recruiting system for several years in order to bring the representation of that group to that level.

As for auxiliary constables, our community recruitment targets the same kinds of people as we do for regular members. We try to interest them in becoming a part of the RCMP with programs like community watches, the auxiliary constables program, or other volunteer programs before they become regular members. That is one way in which young high school or college women can experience the life of a regular RCMP member.

Ms. Éline Michaud: Yes, but is there a special program, or are there special steps taken to go out and recruit women specifically? I was not talking about the wider efforts to recruit in the community, but about what you are doing to target the recruitment of women.

D/Commr Doug Lang: There are targeted programs to recruit women as regular members, but not as auxiliaries. That is a special program. We have no recruiting programs specifically for auxiliaries.

Ms. Éline Michaud: So it must be difficult to meet your goals, to recruit so many women, if there are no specific steps in place to do so. Is that not something to think about in order to improve the recruitment of auxiliary constables?

D/Commr Doug Lang: Perhaps.

Ms. Éline Michaud: Thank you for your honesty.

D/Commr Doug Lang: We have never focused a lot on recruiting auxiliary constables because recruiting women in general is a problem for us.

Ms. Éline Michaud: I understand.

My next question is in the same vein, in a way. In some of the areas you cover, and I am thinking about places like Manitoba and New Brunswick, there are large francophone populations. Are specific steps taken to recruit francophone auxiliary constables, so that you get good representation in the corps?

D/Commr Doug Lang: I cannot give you concrete examples of that. However, each detachment commander determines the number of auxiliaries needed in the detachment within the budget they have been given. In Franco-Manitoban communities, there are certainly francophone auxiliaries, but I do not believe that there is a proactive recruiting campaign.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much, Commissioner.

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

Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome back again, gentlemen.

We're trying to find recommendations, so I'll ask some questions not only to determine what you do but also with a view to determine if we continue along that vein or if there are areas you can recommend to be improved.

This is on auxiliaries. When I was working in Yukon, aside from being a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, I worked for the Yukon fish and wildlife service in the small community of Ross River. Periodically, members would knock on the door and utilize me as another armed peace officer in the community. There wasn't a real policy defined at that time, and there was a bit of concern on both sides when we did that. Of course I would never say no to a member knocking on my door to go out in the community and help them when needed. At that time, they looked at supernumerary constable appointments with other peace officers.

I know we never got that nailed down in the territories. Is that something that is continuing to be explored in northern Canada? Because in those communities you have your conservation officers, and federal Department of Fisheries and Ocean officers, and

Canadian Wildlife Service officers, and sometimes Canada Customs folks, now that they're armed

Is there any appetite to look at, on a very limited role without having a police mandate, utilizing armed peace officers with certain levels of training to assist remote rural police officers when, logistically, bringing somebody in might not be possible from 500 kilometres away in a fly-in community?

• (0930)

D/Commr Doug Lang: Thank you very much for that question.

Our policies in relation to backup and for officer response were a lot less strict up until about 10 to 12 years ago when we had Canada Labour Code rulings. There was a ruling out of Nova Scotia, I think, on a diving accident, where the Canada Labour Code was impressed upon us, that we have to comply with all the Canada Labour Code and all the rules. All the training that our auxiliaries and everyone goes through when they first get into the organization is how the Canada Labour Code applies to us and what that means, and the managing safely program for managers.

About 12 years ago, when we got into looking at officer response and the changing of our on-call policy to our operational response and who is on call and who is not on call—all those questions had to get cleared up. Each detachment commander had to go through exactly what you've brought up and to look at the other resources in his community. Who else in that community is able to back them up when something happens?

So we went through an inventory in every detachment across the country. Can we get away with having one member in that community because we have a couple of armed fish and game officers, because we have somebody else trained in firearms in that community?

We went down that road and came to the realization that, at the end of day, well, we have them there, but they're not there all the time and they're not 100% of the time available to us. While we will use them and engage them, and they're in our members' plans and emergency plans for response to events bigger than what we can handle, we can't, number one, rely on them for those kinds of things. I don't think we have any of them named as supernumerary specialists for us. We can come back with that answer.

We will make those designations for other people but normally not to have someone with a gun be able to come and help us respond.

Mr. Ryan Leef: This is diverging a little from the auxiliary constable program. I remember we had to do a northern suitability test, coming out of training, to determine if...and that was really because the cost of moving a member north and some of the requirements they had to get there were both expensive and there were different operating conditions.

If you still continue with that, is that done for families? We talk a lot about members, but you both would know that families are as big a part as the operation of members of the RCMP, particularly when you start moving to rural remote Canada, as the members themselves and the success of the membership depends on success for the family. The moves become very costly if things deteriorate or if the family really doesn't want to be there and has to go. Is there northern suitability or preparatory training for families going north? Are there things that we can look at to determine whether we continue on that track or are there things we can do to improve the overall outcomes of people we're sending north so we reduce the costs of moving them?

I also have a final question on that. Do we apply that same sort of suitability testing to other units in the RCMP so that we have the best possible outcome and the cost of shifting them or moving them is decreased?

Insp Tyler Bates: I can answer your question.

There are requirements that need to be met, medically and psychologically, in advance of occupying an isolated duration post or a northern post. It is not specific to just the member, but also the member's spouse as well. Prior to our last northern post, my wife and I both underwent that type of testing, and it continues today. It does create some staffing challenges. There are times where the suitability is not there for one reason or another, whether it's a medical issue that would have exorbitant medical costs for a family to go into a northern post and then require travel outside of that post for attention....

It's an extensive psychological testing process as well. There's a very lengthy questionnaire, and in most instances a face-to-face meeting with a psychologist to have further discussion on the suitability of an isolated remote posting.

• (0935)

D/Commr Doug Lang: On the second part of your question—

The Chair: I'll let you answer the question and then we'll come back. Right now we're a half minute over.

D/Commr Doug Lang: Sorry.

Again, the Yukon has probably been at the leading edge of this. In fact, I have to remind myself of the name of the study...the "Sharing Common Ground" study. The territory of the Yukon has asked that members come to the Yukon with certain competencies, some of them being that they want to be involved in the community, they want to live in the north, and they want to learn about the aboriginal culture.

They've put in not so much a new standard but a new set of *exigences* that they want from our members coming in. The funny thing is that every community wants that. Everybody who joined the RCMP 20 or 25 year ago was either a hockey player or a baseball player, and they went into communities and played hockey and

baseball. With the last number of recruits that I trained 15 years ago, one was a Ukrainian dancer, another was a basketball player, and another a woodworker. You can't send those people into certain communities and get them involved, unless that community has that level of involvement.

We are doing better screening in sending people to the north who have the attributes that northern communities want. But everybody wants that; it's finding that balance.

We have a lot of our recruits—it's sad to say—who don't want to do anything after work.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll go to Mr. Rousseau.

[*Translation*]

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

Good morning again, gentlemen. Thank you very much for being here again.

Could you clarify something for me? Do auxiliary constables do any administrative work at all?

Insp Tyler Bates: They help us with our administrative work, like filling in forms. They are involved in a lot of our administrative work.

Mr. Jean Rousseau: Of course, this is on a volunteer basis, correct?

Insp Tyler Bates: Correct.

Mr. Jean Rousseau: Okay.

Earlier, you mentioned that recruiting auxiliary constables was somewhat of a difficulty for you, or that you were not putting a lot of effort into it. I imagine that human resources people recruit the auxiliaries and look after the male-female ratio and the representation of certain francophone communities. Is that correct?

Insp Tyler Bates: We do not have programs specifically designed to recruit auxiliary constables. We already have difficulties and challenges in reaching the ratios we would like for regular members.

Mr. Jean Rousseau: Does that also apply to more multi-ethnic communities, especially urban ones like Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver? I know that you do not have a lot of auxiliary constables, but are there regions with larger, ethnically diverse communities where you have difficulty in recruiting from those communities?

Insp Tyler Bates: The commander has to consider the diversity in the community. We try to attract people from the communities where we provide our policing services, but it is the commander who tries to determine who those people are and to attract them.

Mr. Jean Rousseau: You also said that it works differently from province to province. What happens in Quebec and Ontario, which have provincial police forces? Do you have as big a proportion as in the other provinces? Are the tasks different?

D/Commr Doug Lang: I don't think the auxiliary constables program exists in Quebec or Ontario.

Mr. Jean Rousseau: Yes, that is what I was thinking.

You also mentioned that their focus is on community work. But they are also trained, albeit superficially, in chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defence. Can you give us more details? Are there situations in which they must be called in as back-up, such as for a chemical or biological attack?

And are they trained to deal with terrorist acts? That has been a reality in recent years.

Insp Tyler Bates: The training is only for their own protection if they are ever exposed to situations like that. We try not to expose them. But it is possible, since they are with us in our police cars. When we get to the scene of an incident, it is certainly possible that they may be exposed, but we try to protect them. That is why they get that training.

• (0940)

Mr. Jean Rousseau: Do you think that the approximately 100 hours of training that they get before going into service are enough? Should they have to do more? You are probably going to tell me that, of course, they must do more. So should they do more? Should we have a greater number of auxiliary constables in specific situations?

Insp Tyler Bates: We must make sure that the tasks and functions that we assign to them have no associated risk. It is essential for us not to assign them tasks that would expose them to danger. I believe that the training they receive is sufficient. But we always have to make sure that they are not given any dangerous tasks.

D/Commr Doug Lang: I would like to add a clarification about the length of the training. It is not three weeks in a row. It is three weeks of training that includes a weekend course and an online course, for example. Three weeks is the total duration of the training, logically speaking. Auxiliaries only have to have taken two or three courses in order to be able to get into a police car with another RCMP member. After spending from one to three years in the same detachment, they can take the other courses.

Mr. Jean Rousseau: There is other training.

D/Commr Doug Lang: Yes. That is what

[*English*]

Canada Labour Code demands, CPR and first aid—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Rousseau: That deals with health and safety, as you said.

You also said that there is no national guideline or policy about the training of auxiliary constables. Is there a committee looking into that? Do human resources administrators want to continue these groups in some places in preference to others?

Insp Tyler Bates: There is no committee as such to discuss the auxiliary constables program and recruiting. But there is a committee that discusses ways to attract a variety of people to the RCMP. In those discussions, we consider not only regular members, but also auxiliary constables and other volunteer programs. We focus on the way to attract a diversity of people.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

It looks like Mr. Hawn will have the last question for the day.

You have five minutes.

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, gentlemen.

I have a couple of questions but we'll run out of time. I want to ask you first, is there something that we have not asked you today? Are there some recommendations you would have for auxiliaries, in any aspect, that you wanted to get out on the table?

D/Commr Doug Lang: First and foremost is raising the awareness of the auxiliary program across Canada for all police forces. Every one of us has some sort of program like ours, maybe with a different name such as the cadet program or whatever. Raising that awareness for interest, for people to get in there and try that out, is one thing, but setting a quota or trying to set a number for us becomes difficult.

I want to jump in on that last question because at a three-man detachment, for example, we don't have the time to have an auxiliary ride around with us all the time. We have stuff we need to do by ourselves. We can't have them in the room when we're interviewing somebody. We have investigations that have to be done. We have places we have to go, people we have to see, and we simply can't have that tail tagging along behind us. But they play an important role and we have a need for them to do all kinds of things, and we have to keep them challenged.

If we can't keep a group of auxiliaries challenged, doing certain things and being involved with us front and centre—I'm going through an issue with ours right now on the uniform. They have a certain uniform. We took the yellow stripe away so they wouldn't look like policemen when we're out doing duties, when they had that extra.... We're different.

We're different from England, where no police officer there carries a gun except the armed guys who are in cars, so anybody who has a uniform there and is wearing a bobby hat is the first go-to person. They're not expected to be assaulted or that kind of thing, whereas in Canada we are different, so we have this Canada Labour Code application on us to show a difference.

We're putting the stripe back on their pants for ceremonial purposes, so they will look like us in ceremonies with blue serge. They don't get red ones, but this is getting over that hump of what's the difference between us. They are very proud. Our auxiliaries are very proud of serving with us, and if the committee can make any recommendation in that regard to enhance that need, that use, the benefit of their being in our program—

• (0945)

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Yes, that's fine.

Thank you. I'm glad you touched on recruiting because I wanted to bring that up as well. With respect to going out and trying to get quotas of this or that, it's really self-recruiting, is it not? People self-recruit into that program more than anything else.

D/Commr Doug Lang: But we are going out and actively targeting people—

Hon. Laurie Hawn: You're making people aware that this is available.

D/Commr Doug Lang: —making people aware, and our focus is on the recruiting we have to do to get members in to replace somebody, off the street. The sideline recruiting that we do in the auxiliary program happens after we talk to that person and we get them in the door. One of the benefits—and I forget who asked the question—is that applicants are given extra points on their application in any police force for previous police experience.

Auxiliary police experience counts as previous police experience, but that same young person who wanted to be a police officer can also work at Guardian Security, or the armoured—

Hon. Laurie Hawn: G4S Secure—

D/Commr Doug Lang: Yes, in any of those places, and also get the same sort of experience points. In those places, where do you go? You can be a security guard in a mall and we can really test, when we do our interviews and stuff in our background checks and so on, whether that person abused use of force.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: A quick question.

I'm sorry, but I want to ask you this one. Obviously, if an RCMP constable gets hurt on the job and so on, there is all the protection and so on. What happens with auxiliaries if they get hurt in the performance of their duties?

Insp Tyler Bates: There's a variety of manners in which they are insured, and that's a provincial consideration. In some provinces they're covered under the workers' compensation board for their particular province. In other provinces there is specific insurance that the province has retained for them. It is a consideration and it is

something that, with regard to the assignment of functions and duties, we need to be mindful of in terms of what provisions are available to them for those types of circumstances.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: There is no provision in the RCMP for that kind of—

Insp Tyler Bates: No, there is no overarching provision.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Should there be? I know it's going to be a personal opinion but—

D/Commr Doug Lang: We'll have to come back with an answer to that question, because we fight that same issue with search and rescue volunteers. When we ask them to come to do a job for us or assist us on a search and rescue, how are they covered? I know there is insurance on the search and rescue side. I simply don't have that answer in my pocket for the auxiliaries on what would happen.

I don't believe there is any coverage with the RCMP, super-annuation, etc., but there is something.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: I think that's a good question.

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

Thank you, Commissioner Lang and Inspector Bates. We appreciate your being here again today. It's been very educational on the part of the RCMP on part of the policing that I haven't had a lot of knowledge about, the auxiliary end and the volunteer end. We appreciate your being here today.

We're going to suspend, committee, then we're going in camera to discuss committee business.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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