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## **Standing Committee on Public Accounts**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, May 16, 2019**

**Chair**

**The Honourable Kevin Sorenson**



## Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Thursday, May 16, 2019

• (0845)

[English]

**The Chair (Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC)):** Good morning, colleagues. This is meeting number 138 of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts on Thursday, May 16, 2019.

I will remind committee members, as well as people in the audience and our guests, that we are televised today, so I would encourage you to put your cellphones on vibrate, mute or airplane mode or whatever settings you need to do. That way there will be fewer distractions.

I said that about three weeks ago and then it was my phone which rang, so I've made sure this time.

We are here today in consideration of “Report 5, Equipping Officers of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police”, of the 2019 spring reports of the Auditor General of Canada.

We're pleased to have with us again this morning, from the Office of the Auditor General, Monsieur Sylvain Ricard, Interim Auditor General of Canada, and Nicholas Swales, Principal.

From the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, we welcome the commissioner, Brenda Lucki, and deputy commissioner, contract and indigenous policing, Brian Brennan.

We will open the meeting and give the floor to the Interim Auditor General, Monsieur Ricard.

[Translation]

**Mr. Sylvain Ricard (Interim Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General):** Mr. Chair, thank you for this opportunity to discuss our audit report on equipping officers of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, or RCMP.

Joining me is Nicholas Swales, the principal responsible for the audit.

The RCMP is Canada's largest police force, with more than 18,000 officers. It provides Canadians with policing services at the federal, provincial, territorial and municipal levels, and it serves within indigenous communities.

Since 2001, there have been nine shooting incidents that caused the deaths of 15 RCMP officers in total. On June 4, 2014, an assailant with powerful firearms killed three Moncton RCMP officers and wounded two others.

This audit focused on whether the RCMP provided its officers with hard body armour and semi-automatic weapons called carbines. A key purpose of this equipment is to protect officers in active shooter situations. The audit also looked at officer training on the use of carbines and pistols and at the maintenance of those firearms.

[English]

This audit is important because the RCMP is required to provide appropriate equipment and related training to comply with its duty to protect the health and safety of its officers under the Canada Labour Code and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act.

We found that the RCMP did not define how many carbines were needed to adequately equip officers to respond to active shooters. As a result, the RCMP did not know whether it had provided carbines to all of the officers who needed them and did not know how many more carbines were needed.

We also found that the RCMP had enough hard body armour nationwide to meet its policy requirement of providing one set for each operational vehicle, plus 10%. However, the Ontario and Quebec divisions did not meet this requirement, so not all officers had access to the armour.

We found that the RCMP had met its target for the initial training of front-line officers on carbines, but that 13% of these officers had not completed the annual recertification of their training. This meant that these officers were not permitted to have access to their carbines until they had completed their recertification.

We found that half of the RCMP carbines had not been maintained according to the RCMP policy. Likewise, the RCMP was not meeting its policy requirements for the maintenance of pistols. A firearm must be well maintained to ensure that it functions when an officer needs it to respond to a lethal threat, which generally occurs without warning.

• (0850)

[Translation]

Overall, we found that the RCMP did not have a plan to manage the acquisition of carbines. In our view, this contributed to the backlogs in firearm recertification and maintenance. Inadequate planning also contributed to bottlenecks in distribution and to the RCMP's not always following procurement rules.

We made six recommendations. The RCMP has agreed with all of them and has shared its action plan with us. The plan includes actions and timelines for our recommendations.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my opening remarks. We would be pleased to answer any questions the committee may have.

Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Ricard. We'll now move to Commissioner Lucki.

**Commissioner Brenda Lucki (Commissioner, Royal Canadian Mounted Police):** Good morning, Mr. Chair and members of the committee, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you so much for inviting me and my colleague to speak with you today.

I am joined here by my colleague, Deputy Commissioner Brian Brennan, who is in charge of our contract and indigenous policing at the RCMP. We're here to provide you with information and respond to your questions.

At the outset, I would like to thank the Office of the Auditor General for its report and to highlight that the report is fully aligned with our vision 150, the RCMP's road map to modernization. The RCMP will turn 150 years old—or maybe 150 years young—in 2023, and since I have had the honour of taking the job as the commissioner of the RCMP, I have begun to implement vision 150.

To do this, we sought the input of all RCMP employees to build our modernization road map, which focuses on objectives that fall under the four key pillars: our people, our culture, our stewardship and our policing services. These four pillars have clear objectives that will steer us along the path forward in modernizing our organization.

Since the Moncton shootings in 2014, the RCMP has worked diligently to implement recommendations from the MacNeil report. The safety of our employees is of utmost importance to me as the commissioner and to the RCMP as a whole. A safe workplace is critical to the RCMP's ability to achieve its mandate of a safer Canada.

Accordingly, we have accepted each of the OAG's recommendations and are actively addressing and implementing them. The OAG highlighted that we met and exceeded our carbine training target and that we are also meeting our target of providing access to hard body armour to operational front-line officers.

I will take this opportunity to emphasize additional work that has been done, and is ongoing, which has also had a positive effect on officer safety.

Effective responses to active shooter incidences require not only the right equipment, but also the right training and the right tactics. Therefore, any analysis of our members' readiness must take into account the tactical training.

Since 2016, more than 13,000 officers have been trained in tactics to respond to active threats, and now all cadets at our training centre receive patrol carbine and active threat training. As a result, an average of 25 newly trained members are deployed across the country each week. Recently, the Government of Canada has invested a significant amount of money for a new state-of-the-art 100-metre range and simulation centre that will assist us in achieving these goals.

We have also trained more than 1,100 police officers in initial critical incident response, which educates supervisors on how to manage critical incidents until an accredited critical incident commander can take charge. There have been numerous incidents across the country where this training and equipment have saved lives.

Tactical training for RCMP officers has further supplemented other developments covered by the OAG's audit, particularly in relation to equipment and corresponding training. I am proud of how we continue to adapt and deliver leading-edge policing services that help keep communities safe. The RCMP has taken great strides in support of policing excellence and recognizes there are always opportunities for continuous and ongoing improvement.

Several activities are already under way to address concerns raised by the OAG. Last October we started using an electronic interactive mapping system that provides operational leaders in RCMP divisions with the number of carbines and carbine-trained officers down to the detachment level. This system supports evidence-based decision-making on carbine distribution.

The OAG found that we largely met our requirements for providing hard body armour. To continue looking forward for policing excellence, the RCMP is examining having hard body armour personally assigned to all operational front-line officers.

We are also developing a stronger operational standard for the number of carbine-trained members, and are examining the possibility of equipping every operational police vehicle with a long gun.

● (0855)

With respect to firearms training, we have far more consistency and have made significant improvements in a number of key areas. For example, the annual firearms qualification program was recently revised to focus on skills development and further enhance tactical training. We continue to improve our firearms instructor training to focus on physical skills and increasing compliance rates through the creation of a more facilitative learning environment for our officers.

Regarding our compliance levels for pistol and carbine annual qualifications, we recognize the importance of ensuring a ready workforce. That is why we are reviewing existing firearms training policies and practices, while also putting additional mechanisms in place to achieve the highest level of oversight and accountability. This work will be carried out under the guidance of the RCMP's national mandatory training oversight committee.

The RCMP will always strive towards the desired compliance rates and will work towards solutions for the challenges to be overcome, such as those that come with Canada's geography and climate, particularly in the north. My senior executive team and I will continue to hold ourselves to the high standards and are committed to supporting the review of existing firearms training policies and practices in order to achieve the highest level of compliance and accountability.

With regard to firearms maintenance, the RCMP has a well-established preventive maintenance program that seeks to ensure that all members have safe and reliable firearms for use in their duties, as well as spares when required. We are meeting this objective, and in response to the audit, we will ensure that our current preventative maintenance policies are clarified so that the expected periods of time for servicing are clearly articulated and communicated.

Last, the RCMP is committed to examining options for more robust project management and will ensure that life-cycle elements are considered during the project approval process. From a governance perspective, the RCMP will establish a committee for assets and materiel as part of its investment management framework to ensure investment decisions fully consider life cycles of given policing equipment.

It should also be noted that the RCMP has improved its oversight on officer safety equipment through the creation of an operational equipment oversight committee that ensures the timely advancement of procurement, training, and health and safety components for priority equipment. The RCMP is committed to an open, fair and transparent procurement process, while obtaining the best possible value for Canadians.

Before I conclude, I would stress that the RCMP is fiercely dedicated to taking care of our people, a key element of the RCMP's vision 150. Our road to modernization is a constant process. We understand that we will continue to face challenges and criticisms along the way and we will continue to come out as a stronger organization.

As we continue to work on the implementation of operational training and equipment, the OAG's recommendations will certainly assist us in our efforts and I'm confident that we will continue to improve. The RCMP has developed a management action plan to address all of the recommendations and will be sharing it with our membership as part of our culture of communicating decisions and holding ourselves to account.

Through stewardship and sound decision-making, we will ensure RCMP officers have access to the equipment and training they need to do their job as safely and effectively as possible.

We would be happy to respond to your questions. Thank you.

• (0900)

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

We will move into our first round of questions, with Mr. Sarai, please, for seven minutes.

**Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.):** Thank you.

First, I recognize the integral role the RCMP has had in the safety of Canadians, and the high level of safety and security which is felt throughout the country. We thank you for that, especially in my riding of Surrey Centre.

As you know, Surrey has the largest RCMP detachment in Canada. It is also home to the B.C. headquarters, E Division. Thank you for your work. Whatever we can do to guarantee the health and safety of our officers is paramount. However, this also gives us concern, because we have a lot of police officers in Surrey Centre,

and Surrey in general, who work and serve there. The Auditor General's report was quite concerning to us, as 13% were found to not be trained adequately to use carbines and to not have body armour.

Recommendation 5.24 states that the RCMP "should establish a national standard to ensure that each detachment is adequately equipped with carbines". Given the nature of contract policing, can you explain exactly how the decisions are made and what equipment should be issued in different detachments that might have different needs?

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** Certainly.

We always work off risk assessment. Risk assessment does not always include the actual safety, but it includes the geography: how many members are at each detachment; did they have access to backup; and how close is backup. If they are at an isolated post and can only fly in, we'll take that into consideration.

It's not always based on Criminal Code statistics or the actual crime, but also that we have to take all those factors into account. We put that through a risk assessment.

For example, in the first round of deploying the carbine, we had to ensure that isolated detachments were given the equipment they needed, and we rolled it out. We could not purchase all of it at once. We had to use a risk assessment, and that was in consultation with each district and detachment commander.

**Mr. Randeep Sarai:** We see numbers for Ontario and apparently Quebec. What are the numbers for British Columbia? How many have the training for carbines and how many would have body armour?

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** I don't have the exact numbers with me, but we could provide those, should you wish.

**Mr. Randeep Sarai:** Please do. Also, if you could, those numbers in regard to the Surrey detachment would be of importance to us.

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Randeep Sarai:** How is the RCMP going to conduct assessments at the division or detachment level, given commanding officers' evidence-based information, to continue to make the sound, risk-based decision on the carbine to be assessed? How do you make that decision?

I understand that the north was given priority first, but if an officer is on patrol and hears a call for something that they need a carbine for, do they stop and go back, or should they rest assured that their vehicle has the body armour and carbine they need to go and assess the situation?

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** The risk assessment was done in the initial instance because we could not deploy a carbine for every vehicle. That's when the risk assessment was done. However, now we're in a position where each member, if they are trained, would have access to the carbine, to put that in their vehicle. Therefore, that has changed.

The risk assessment was more for the initial issuing of the patrol carbines. However, in big units such as Surrey, they would have access to that equipment, if they are carbine trained, to put it in their vehicle.

**Mr. Randeep Sarai:** How do you ensure that all of them are carbine trained? Why wouldn't every officer be carbine trained? When you have an annual fitness review, and so on, or other reviews where you make sure that the officer has complied, why isn't carbine training one of those things?

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** First of all, at the training academy, in terms of the instruction each cadet now receives, we added two weeks to our 24-week induction training. This has been going on for a couple of years. One week is carbine training and the second week is immediate action, rapid deployment training.

Going forward, every person who graduates from the training academy leaves with carbine training unless they're unsuccessful, because it actually is very rigorous training. They would have to get retrained if they weren't able to pass while they were in the training academy. They might need to get reassessed when they're deployed.

• (0905)

**Mr. Randeep Sarai:** How often do they have to get recertified?

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** It's yearly.

**Mr. Randeep Sarai:** How many of the officers are getting recertified annually, as a percentage?

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** Our goal is 100%.

**Mr. Randeep Sarai:** What is it currently?

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** I don't have those numbers with me.

For us to actually get to 100% is almost impossible, only because, with transfers, members might be certified in the month of September, because that's when their area does the recertification. In April, they might get transferred and miss when they were supposed to get recertified, so they might be delayed. They might not get it at exactly a year.

Also, in the northern—

**Mr. Randeep Sarai:** You understand that we as public servants when there's a situation where an officer gets transferred midway, in September, reacts to a situation, does not have access to a carbine because he or she was not trained on it, gets shot and becomes a casualty, we'll be held accountable and you'll be held accountable.

How do we mitigate so that does not happen, so that everyone has the training, has the equipment and we're not short of it? If we have 110% of the required amount, thus 10% more than every single member, how do we ensure that everyone has training and has access to that at all times?

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** Well, we work on our robust training plan to ensure that certifications are done within their year. The same goes for our side-arm training. Our initial commitment, when we first got the carbines, was to ensure that we had, I think, 65% of the membership trained on carbine. We've since exceeded that and we're going to continue to exceed it as we go along.

Often there are some people who, for various reasons, might not get trained. They may come from a position that wasn't front line, so

they were never trained on carbine, and then they get transferred to front line so now they'll get put in the queue to be trained for carbine.

That's why I say we do it as quickly as we can. Often they may not get trained exactly when they arrive, but their training will be scheduled.

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

One of the questions you posed to the commissioner was about the number of members who did not have the recertification. It is in the Auditor General's report. There were 13% who had not been recertified. They had the certification but not the yearly—

**Mr. Randeep Sarai:** I wanted to know about British Columbia.

**The Chair:** You wanted it specific to B.C. I apologize.

We'll now move to Mr. Davidson.

**Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC):** Good morning. I want to echo my colleagues' comments and thank the RCMP for all the good work the officers do.

I'm going to roll back to the Moncton shooting. I think what's disconcerting to some Canadians is that, in a report on that, it was determined that the RCMP had failed to provide adequate equipment and training to the Mounties who responded to the Moncton shootings in 2014. There was a judge, Leslie Jackson, who actually applied a \$550,000 penalty to the RCMP, which was allocated to various community initiatives, educational trust funds and the children of the Mounties who were killed. According to Judge Jackson, the sentence should tell future leadership of the RCMP that the duty to ensure member safety should be given the highest priority.

Based on the findings of the Auditor General's report being discussed today, do you believe that the leadership of the RCMP has adequately ensured the safety of RCMP members since that sentence was applied? Has the leadership given this the highest priority? We're looking back at 2014, and now we're in 2019, still dealing with this problem. I recognize you have started a couple of committees. Who exactly do those committees report to?

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** First off, safety is of the highest priority for the leadership of the RCMP. We've done many initiatives in the tactical training area with immediate action rapid deployment training. Every member has to recertify on all their intervention options, and we have added to that training. This is not training for new members; this is for members in the field. When they go to recertify on their firearms, they also get training on immediate action rapid deployment. That was added to their annual recertification. That was one portion.

We will also, in the coming years, be looking at various soft and hard techniques and adding them to our recertification annually. We also have added a critical incident response. What happened was that we saw the gap. In Moncton or in a big area like Surrey, it doesn't show itself, but in smaller areas, where a bunch of members come to a scene before an emergency response team or a trained critical incident responder comes on the scene, we needed to require the detachment commanders and leadership to have that training so they could deploy members safely, having an eye on the situation and creating parameters. We created that training so that each supervisor would have the training needed to deal with a critical incident before specialized teams arrive on the scene. That's been rolled out. I'm trying to think of some of the other training we had....

● (0910)

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** On the new committees that you've created, do they report directly to the leadership?

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** They would report to deputy commissioner Brian Brennan as part of community and indigenous policing. Brian is in charge of the critical incident program, as well as reviewing any type of equipment, looking at new equipment and testing. For example, we're in the midst of evergreening our side arm. The deputy commissioner of indigenous and contract policing is the person who would start that review.

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** In paragraph 5.23 the Auditor General's report indicates discrepancies between the RCMP's data and the number of carbines located in various detachments across the country. We have a big country and a great country, but is it possible that carbines have gone missing due to these discrepancies? Approximately how many RCMP firearms go missing every year?

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** I haven't received any reports of missing carbines. A lot of the side arms, for example, will go into our armour shop and they'll be accounted for there. They may not be accounted for outside of that environment. I haven't received any reports of a—

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** I'm just saying it says that there are data discrepancies. If we don't have good data, if we don't know how many guns we have, how do we know if any have or haven't gone missing? Is the data in check now, so we can confirm all the serial numbers and that all the carbines are accounted for? Do we have that data?

**Deputy Commissioner Brian Brennan (Deputy Commissioner, Contract and Indigenous Policing, Royal Canadian Mounted Police):** In the early stages of the rollout, we rolled it out from divisions. Divisions rolled it out to districts, and then to detachments. At that time, we didn't have the most robust system to track those movements.

As pointed out in the OAG report, we have improved the system. We now have an interactive, web-based model by which we track them right down to the detachment level. Now we can go, almost in live time, right to the detachment, determine how many they have, the exact serial numbers, and how many people in that detachment are trained. We've moved the yardsticks quite a bit in that regard.

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** Okay, so are you a hundred per cent confident that no carbines have gone missing and every one is accounted for?

**D/Commr Brian Brennan:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** Okay.

**The Chair:** Make it quick.

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** It's encouraging that the RCMP has accepted all the Auditor General's recommendations and there's a plan to improve the situation. Does the RCMP recognize that the findings of this audit undermine any public confidence in our national police force, especially when there is a threat to public safety, for example, an active shooter situation?

When members of the general public read this, they get a little disconcerted.

● (0915)

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** First, everything that gets reviewed always gets improved. If we were to say that something was perfect, then I think our organization would be naive. Even today, if we were to re-review.... Given the evolution of policing and how the dynamics change so often, we always have to be nimble and dynamic to change with that environment. That's why we welcome these reviews. We work very closely with the OAG when we're looking at things to review to make our organization better.

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** Thank you.

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

We'll now move to Ms. Yip, please.

**Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** Thank you for coming.

In your detailed action plan, on page 1, it mentions static maps from the national headquarters to monitor carbine distribution. What are static maps? How do they relate to the monitoring of the carbine distribution and training?

**D/Commr Brian Brennan:** The static maps are a web-based mapping system that tracks the carbines as they get deployed to detachments. The commanding officer of the division or the people working for that particular commanding officer can bring up the detachment, and the map will show that they have so many carbines and so many trained members. Then they're able to use that in determining more deployment of carbines and to identify which members need that training in those particular detachments.

Because of the nature of mobility within the RCMP, it's important that we have eyes on the training to ensure that we keep a robust complement of members trained with access to those particular weapons.

**Ms. Jean Yip:** If it's interactive, that means it's being updated regularly and that any time another detachment wants to see it or needs to have access to additional carbines, it can see it, right?

**D/Commr Brian Brennan:** That's correct.

**Ms. Jean Yip:** Okay. That's great.

In your opening remarks, you mentioned that there's an average of 20 to 25 newly trained members who are deployed across the country every week. I think that's great. Is there enough body armour and carbines in reserve for these new members, as well as spares?

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** Our eventual goal is to ensure that they are issued to—assigned, we say—each member. That's our goal. Right now, we ensure that they're in the vehicles so that they have access to that equipment when they go out on calls. Unfortunately, we have a lot of attrition, too, so it sort of balances out.

**Ms. Jean Yip:** The Auditor General's report said that in 2013 there would be a need for about 3,000 total rifles, and the force has now bought over 6,000 carbines. What has caused this number to increase so dramatically?

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** We have three long guns: shot guns, rifles and carbines. We're actually doing a study on whether we need all three. Each one serves a different purpose, depending on the type of policing and the rural environments. Do we have enough of each? We are studying that, but for the time being, some divisions have opted to not recertify rifles, for example, and to keep shot guns. It depends on the dynamics of the division, and we've given that decision to the individual commanding officers.

I sometimes think that we have so much equipment. We have to be sure that members can make great decisions with the equipment they have, so we want to make sure that they have the right equipment. That study will be done....

Brian, maybe you can expand on the three different....

**D/Commr Brian Brennan:** Yes, thank you.

As the commissioner mentioned, we have three varieties of long weapons that we use. Your question around the number—5,400—of carbines out there.... That, again, is based on the risk assessment of the different environments. Clearly, this is a weapon that the membership is comfortable using. It's more adaptable to a lot of our policing situations, and our investment in our equipment leans us towards that particular weapon as opposed to, maybe, the long rifle. We need to evaluate it.

We're looking at a long-term strategy in terms of exactly what weapons need to be provided to our membership and to what extent those weapons will be used. It's going to take us some time to get through that in terms of environmental...and availability, but our goal is to ensure that our members' safety is paramount and that we provide them with the proper pieces of equipment and training to do that job. It's a long-term evaluation of that piece.

● (0920)

**Ms. Jean Yip:** I hope that can help with the increasing gun violence in our urban cities, especially where I come from in Toronto. In my riding, we've had an increase in robberies.

Was a risk analysis conducted by the RCMP to determine if the smaller detachments, such as those with under five officers, might require carbines and body armour?

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** Yes, absolutely. Again, some of it was based on the geography. I'll use Manitoba as an example. There are 23 detachments that are all very far north, and seven of them are fly-in only. It takes a little longer for them to have backup in a big incident because we don't drive to those detachments. We have to

ensure that they have the equipment. We make sure that they are deployed carbines and that members in those areas are trained.

Where the challenge is, again, in those areas.... For example, the 23 detachments in northern Manitoba are all limited duration, so every two, three and four years, people are rotated in and out. We have to make sure that they get trained down south before they go up north. We don't want to take them out of the communities to get trained because they're only up there for as short as two years.

Absolutely, the risk assessment was based on that and, obviously, the crime statistics as well.

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

Mr. Christopherson and then Mr. Kelly.

**Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, all, for your presence today. It's good to see you again.

There are a number of pieces to this and my colleagues have raised a number of the issues I was going to raise. That's all to the good. I'm going to start drilling down a bit into some of the weeds here.

We have problems with government-wide procurement, all the way from flying—as everybody follows the saga of military jets—down to hammers. Paragraph 5.62 says:

We found that the RCMP did not have a plan to manage the acquisition of carbines, causing bottlenecks in distribution and backlogs in firearm recertification and maintenance. We also found that in the RCMP's effort to expedite the rollout of the carbines, the RCMP and Public Services and Procurement Canada did not follow procurement rules.

This matters.

When I look over to page 13, paragraph 5.72 adds further insult to injury. Not only did the RCMP not follow the procedures properly, and that's including Public Services and Procurement Canada, but once again Treasury Board let us down on its challenge function, which is its duty to make sure that these things are double-checked. There was a falling down there.

Specifically, under procurement, here's what troubled me the most:

5.71: Under procurement rules, the RCMP should have submitted these orders—

This would be for, I believe, the carbines:

—to Public Services and Procurement Canada as a single request. However, this request would have exceeded Public Services and Procurement Canada's own purchase authority and therefore would have required approval from the Treasury Board. Instead, the RCMP split the order into three requests, which Public Services and Procurement Canada ordered under its own authority.



What's the deal, Commissioner? This looks, for all intents and purposes, like an absolute, deliberate attempt to get around requirements at Treasury Board, notwithstanding that it didn't do its job either. What's going on here, Commissioner?

• (0925)

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** With the carbine, it's a single source. It wouldn't have changed. Once we determined which carbine we were purchasing, it wouldn't change anything, because we could only buy it from one source. We could only afford so many at a time, so we could only purchase as much as we could afford.

I do have with me the director general in charge of that and he could perhaps explain more specifically.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Yes, I do want to drill down a bit on this, because it's problematic.

**The Chair:** For those who may be watching, departments bring their personnel from different areas of expertise and although there are a few who sit at the table, there are others in the audience. We're pleased to have Mr. Watters with us this morning.

Mr. Watters, we'll give you some time on this question.

**Mr. Dennis Watters (Chief Financial and Administrative Officer, Royal Canadian Mounted Police):** Thank you for the question and thank you, Commissioner, for allowing me to respond.

What we had in place at the time was a standing offer to procure the carbines. Our view was that there was no requirement for us to bundle the requirement, the request for process, as the needs were determined, in order to expedite the contracting process.

When you have a standing offer, you can do call-ups against those standing offers and, in our view, it would not have resulted in any savings. To reiterate what the commissioner said, we purchased those under the munitions supply program which has provided Public Services and Procurement with the means to contract large quantities of small arms.

There are four companies that are designated as sources as part of the munitions supply program, one being Colt Canada, where we did procure the carbines. We do not feel it would have resulted in any savings. We had standing offers in place and we followed the process. Bundling of those would not have resulted in any savings.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** So this wasn't a get around?

**Mr. Dennis Watters:** No.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Okay, Auditor General, are you comfortable with the answers you've heard?

**Mr. Sylvain Ricard:** Well, I'll maybe put the nuance in there, and I'll leave Mr. Swales to add any specifics he feels are needed.

We're pleased to see that, in the response to the action plan, the RCMP will address the planning aspect of the business, because for us, that is the cause of it. They get requests from all over the place all together. There's a mechanism and there are rules in place that, when you are above a certain amount, there's a process to follow, and that's the message we're trying to convey here, that Treasury Board has a role to play when it's above a certain amount.

When you let that role be played out, it contributes through management. It has other mechanisms, and the commissioner was

referencing the fact that they were open to all sorts of challenges in the question process, and that's one of those.

It brings a process by which you get questions. It helps to highlight ways of improving and ways of looking at projects. That's the message we're conveying here.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Thank you.

Do we have anyone here from Treasury Board, Chair?

**The Chair:** No.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Maybe, in our deliberations, we could think about sending a letter to Treasury Board to ask them where they were on their challenge function because, again, that's the safety net for us in most of these policy procedures. If it's failing us at the departmental level, it gets caught at Treasury Board in their challenge function, and so it seems that this may have slipped.

Commissioner, who, not an individual, but—

**The Chair:** Very quickly.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Okay, thanks.

What department is responsible for the planning? I'm really surprised at the lack of planning. That's normally not RCMP failure. They're usually pretty good at doing lots of planning. It's between there and the ground where things get difficult, as in most cases. Who was responsible for this? Where did your organization fail? What have you done about beefing up the very planning that Monsieur Ricard has just spoken of?

• (0930)

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

Commissioner.

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** Yes, we obviously have multiple planning sections depending on what we're dealing with, but when we go into equipment, there's a robust plan as to what's next in line for equipment. Then we do a lot of testing of that equipment. We have to do a lot of consultation with our contract partners because we're in a contract, and we have to make sure that they're made aware of any new purchases because there's money involved that is not all federally funded. In some cases, in a city environment, 90% of that is paid by the municipality. In a provincial environment, it's 70%. We have to make sure that we can do a proper rollout within the funding envelopes that we have.

That's where risk assessments all come into play, but in this case, we determined very quickly where these carbines needed to be deployed. Obviously, in the Moncton situation, there were members with carbines, but that situation was a pretty dynamic situation, and I'm not sure.... I know the MacNeil report has made those recommendations, and we are absolutely following all the recommendations.

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

We'll now move to Mr. Kelly followed by Mr. Dhaliwal.

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Commissioner, I'm going to read the sentence from the concluding paragraph of the report:

We concluded that the RCMP had not provided all of its officers with access to hard body armour, carbines, and recertification training to respond to an active shooter.

My question for you is, why?

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** We could not deploy 100% to every single member. With 20,000 members, we could not deploy 20,000 hard body armour nor the carbines at 100% of the need because of the amount that it took. We had to do it in segments.

Maybe I could get Mr. Watters to explain that process because, given the numbers that we were dealing with, we had to do the risk assessment and ensure that, based on our risk assessment, we'd roll it out in that fashion. We just didn't have enough equipment to do it at the same time.

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** Commissioner, I didn't see anything in the report that said you were under-resourced or that you did not have enough hard body armour or enough carbines. You received equipment that you had asked for, and yet members who needed access to this equipment did not have it. That is not a matter of resourcing or having resources. That's management.

Why did the people who needed it not have it?

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** An active shooter situation can happen anywhere. To say that we knew what was going to happen in Moncton.... We didn't know that was going to happen in Moncton. We tried to ensure that when we did the deployment we could get as much of that type of equipment out to as many people as possible.

To say that at the point of the tragedy in Moncton, everybody who needed access to a carbine had it, no, they didn't. We didn't have the means to do that.

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** Mr. Ricard, are you satisfied with that answer?

**Mr. Sylvain Ricard:** I'll bring it back to the planning aspect of the project management. As the commissioner mentioned, I will accept that overnight you can't deploy 20,000, or whatever the exact number is, instantly. What you need to do is establish what you're trying to do, have a national standard to determine how many carbines you need, plan for it, procure for it, deploy it in an orderly manner and manage the progress of that.

I'll go back to where I was earlier for us. That's a key limit in the report: good project management. The project management aspect is the cause of not planning for the need for recertification or the workload of the maintenance for the capacity they have. Good planning allows you to see all of those things coming—

●(0935)

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** It was your finding that good planning did not take place.

**Mr. Sylvain Ricard:** Yes. That's a very important part of our report. Again, we're pleased to see the action and the response. They're going to address that because it needs to be addressed; otherwise, it's a circular thing.

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** Absolutely.

I want to get back to the commissioner.

My question wasn't why 20,000 members of the force do not have a carbine and a set of hard body armour. My question was why there was not better management in this. Where did the management break down?

This is about management. This isn't about resources. This isn't about whether every single member has a carbine. This is about why the project wasn't managed correctly. This is the committee for accountability for public spending.

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** We took the steps that we felt were needed, first of all, to procure and deploy the carbines as per our risk assessment. Obviously, referring to the case of Moncton, there were gaps in that. We admit that there were gaps in that and are trying to figure out how to do that better, through reviews from the OAG and through our planning process.

We've reviewed our planning process to ensure that when we get the next type of equipment we most definitely make sure we are more succinct in our planning.

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** I have a little more time.

The RCMP did not track its distribution of hard body armour in any national database. We've heard about poor data from various government departments in virtually every committee report that we've heard from the Auditor General. When Canadians read this, it conjures up images of force members who need hard body armour, but don't know where it is and don't know how to access it because there's no database.

How do you even know where your equipment is and ensure that it's distributed appropriately if you don't have a database that keeps track of where your equipment is?

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

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** As Deputy Commissioner Brennan referred to earlier, we have improved on our tracking for the equipment. It's a little more problematic with hard body armour versus a carbine because it's not serial numbered, but we are ensuring that the numbers are tracked on the system.

**The Chair:** Before we go to Mr. Dhaliwal, I want to explain to you, so that you don't feel you are being picked on so much, that this committee takes the data—dissemination data and management data—very seriously. We're finding that across governments, there is a data problem in this country in management, input and access.

When we see that the Auditor General says again on the first page, “nor did the RCMP have the necessary information”, that goes back to data. We go through the report and, in different places, it talks about data.

I want to build on one thing. Our analysts have helped with this. You've already talked about some of the changes you're making to data. Does the RCMP currently have a suitable information management system, and training on that system, to accurately track and manage, for example, weapons inventories, certification and recertification?

We have all heard of the Phoenix pay system. We've heard of other things where it boils down to problems with data systems. Is the system good, and is the training on that system adequate in the RCMP?

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** Thank you for that question. We're always looking at technology. One thing I can say is that part of vision 150 is getting better business intelligence within the RCMP. We have a lot of databases, but often we can't do the analytics. We need to get better at that.

With equipment, I know some of the technology we're rolling out... For example, we have 800 members at the Surrey detachment. They have a system where they can track equipment coming in and going out, by each individual member. When they're assigned a CEW, a conducted energy weapon, or a carbine at the beginning of their shift and they're not individually issued, that can be tracked. Not only can it be tracked, but if somebody asks for a conducted energy weapon, and they've been off for three weeks, the system will say, "Sorry, I can't issue that, because your certification expired yesterday," or, "It expired while you were on secondment for two months."

The technology is there. We've rolled it out in the bigger units. We're always looking at better tracking, not only of resources such as equipment, but also with members themselves. We're tracking their whereabouts for critical incidents through android phones. We've just purchased 8,000, to better track for critical incidents, which was part of the MacNeil recommendations.

• (0940)

**The Chair:** Good. Thank you very much for that extra information.

Mr. Dhaliwal, I didn't steal your time. You'll get your time.

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and welcome to the witnesses.

My question goes to Auditor General Ricard.

In Surrey, even though we are very well served by the RCMP, the new mayor and the council are taking the direction of going to a municipal police force. When it comes to standard RCMP maintaining all these standards, and a municipal police, do you see any discrepancies in how they are doing? What are the challenges Surrey will face?

**Mr. Sylvain Ricard:** We have not audited that. We have not analyzed or compared benchmarks to other organizations. That is something for management to do. I suppose they do that when they do the risk assessment and compare other organizations. I'll leave it to the organizations to speak to that. That is not something we've audited.

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** Commissioner Lucki, thank you very much again for the great work the RCMP is doing to keep our country's

streets safe. In particular, Surrey—Newton has a detachment which Randeep and I have visited a few times, and have seen the great progress they have made.

Surrey is thinking of going to a municipal police force. Can you say what the impact will be?

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** We obviously don't control the standards of the municipal agencies. However, they often come to us when we are rolling out new equipment. When we hear of new technology they are using, we are sharing that technology.

I know that in some of the provinces, they're looking at provincial standards for all their police agencies. It's something we are examining. It's interesting. I just had this conversation last night, about national policing standards. Maybe that's something we need to look at. Geography in our country always changes the standards, because what would happen in Surrey might not happen in Pangnirtung, Nunavut.

We don't control their standards, but we often share them, and when we are looking at new equipment, we often go to somebody who already has it.

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** Commissioner, last year, two RCMP officers came to my office. They expressed concern about not getting even their uniforms on time, and the cars not being maintained—the old models.

My concern is that if they can't get the basic equipment, how will you develop a plan so that the morale and the confidence of RCMP officers to get the proper training and proper equipment is there?

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** I will comment that sometimes it's not a question of having the equipment or the uniform; sometimes it's a personal preference on what type of uniform they have. In the Lower Mainland, in particular, many of the individuals buy their own pants, because they don't like the issued pants.

We are examining all of that. Actually, under vision 150, we have an innovation mailbox that allows the members to provide suggestions on equipment and training. We've received many suggestions in the uniform department, and we're testing some new uniform kit in the Lower Mainland.

Obviously in the RCMP, dealing with 20,000 members is a huge, huge task when we are procuring, especially when we go to switching equipment. However, when it comes to the safety equipment, that is non-negotiable. If we're going to get that equipment in, we have to make sure we have enough for what the risk assessment tells us. Absolutely.

• (0945)

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** Commissioner, in terms of this 13%, the officers who need to get trained, what do you see as the timeline for getting that completed?

**D/Commr Brian Brennan:** We work to ensure that all of our members get the training they need in a timely fashion.

That 13% may not be regular members who are active for duty. Some of that 13% could be those who are off on long-term sick leave or on maternity or paternity leave. That number is very hard for us to determine. Also, it's taken at a point in time.

With our training regime, in terms of identifying who needs the training, we are making gains in that area, but it's not always 13% of our active members. We're constantly refreshing with the members that they need this training, and we provide the opportunities for it.

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

Mr. Motz, welcome.

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

**The Chair:** I'll let you speak but not vote.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Thank you. Sounds like at my house.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

I want to clarify a couple of things.

You talked about the 20,000 members that the RCMP has, but we all understand that these are not 20,000 operational members. It's obvious that we would never obtain carbines for 20,000 members.

The issue, and I think the Auditor General has made it clear, is that the operational people.... It should be understood, I hope, that every operational member and every operational vehicle in the fleet of the RCMP, no matter where you are in Canada, should have access to a carbine.

Is that your goal?

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** I would say yes and no.

Obviously in a marked vehicle, yes. For unmarked vehicles, the ratio might not be one per vehicle. In the unmarked, plainclothes world, when they need the carbines, they work as a group, and they go and do what they need to do. They will take the carbines that they need for that. They are not reacting to front-line policing. There are other people who do that.

That's why I say yes and no.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** That's fair, but we know in policing that things are dynamic. When you have a Mayerthorpe and you have a Moncton, you don't have operational guys responding to these by themselves. You have your plainclothes cars responding. You have your guys who aren't necessarily equipped to handle that.

I think it's important to appreciate that those members might be on traffic in a plainclothes car. They may need access to a carbine in the right circumstance.

That's what I want to try to get at, as far as the training and the issuance of carbines are concerned. The goal in the MacNeil report is to have the members of the RCMP who are put in those positions properly trained, properly equipped, and then there's the maintenance and recertification of that equipment.

The other thing I want to ask about is body armour.

Your operational members wear soft body armour as a matter of issue, and it's a requirement in your policy, from what I understand. Does your soft body armour have the plates? When you say that you're now going to go to hard body armour, are you doing plate inserts or—

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** No.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** —are you doing a separate body armour?

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** Separate body armour.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Fair enough.

The goal is to have those included in the equipment in the trunks of operational vehicles. Is that the plan?

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** Right now, that's where it is. Our plan is to individually assign.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Okay.

On training, you indicated that 13% of your members are not certified in carbines. Is that 13% of your operational members or 13% of your 20,000 members?

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** That's 13% of operational members, I believe.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** That's an important distinction. I don't know if the Auditor General found that number.

**D/Commr Brian Brennan:** Are you referring to recertification or certification?

**Mr. Glen Motz:** I'm referring to certification. I'm trying to remember what the report said. It said that 13% of your members are not certified, I believe. I'm just trying to clarify whether that meant 13% of the 20,000 or 13% of your operational members. I don't know how many that would be.

•(0950)

**Mr. Nicholas Swales (Principal, Office of the Auditor General):** Mr. Chairman, if I may, that was a percentage of members who had received initial training on the carbine the first time around.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Thank you for that.

From what I know from my background and from many friends and former colleagues in the RCMP, as well as from travelling across the country on many issues related to my portfolio in public safety, training on issues of handguns, carbines and officer safety tactics is not consistent across the country in the RCMP. You might have a funnel point, or touch point, in the Maritimes, with the ability to have your members recertified when they go there, but it's different from those around Regina or Ottawa.

Is it possible that the RCMP may expand their ability to recertify by involving private gun instructors who are fully qualified, as much or sometimes more than our own members would be? Is that a possibility for getting those recertification numbers up in those areas where we are falling short?

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** It's not always linked to the number of instructors. It's location and the availability of ranges. Carbine is very specific in terms of what kind of range we can use, and we're very limited in that area. It's also geography. For instance, detachment members in Nunavut need to come to a central location to recertify. It's not just the fact that it's intense in terms of instructors. It's also intense in terms of moving members to locations where they can recertify.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Commissioner.

Mr. Brennan, did you want to add to that?

**D/Commr Brian Brennan:** Yes.

It's not just about the static training in use of the carbine itself. Using private instructors has barriers in terms of the articulation of RCMP policy and how we work in teams. While private instructors may have the functional capability to fire the weapon, they would not be exposed to all the things around it that are also included in our training.

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

We'll now move to Mr. Ayoub.

[Translation]

**Mr. Ramez Ayoub (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for appearing before the committee today.

I have five minutes, so I can't cover everything in that time. Like my fellow members, I'd like to talk about the serious concerns related to oversight. I'm not sure whether they can be described as management issues or management deficiencies. Given what we've heard so far, I feel there's a lot of justifying going on. We are being told about the challenges tied to geography, training and so forth.

In the past, I've worked with local police commissions in Quebec, and I can tell you that anything involving training, equipment, tools, firearms or bulletproof vests was considered critical. Those things were essential to an officer's work, and no one went out into the field without them. It makes me very uncomfortable to find out that, when the equipment was finally rolled out, it wasn't possible to achieve 100% compliance. A certain percentage of compliance will always be out of reach for a variety of reasons. Do the officers in the field lack any of the required training they are supposed to have? Are they missing any of the equipment they are supposed to have? Reassure me, please, because I find this very troubling.

[English]

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** I can assure you that they get the equipment and training they need. When you speak about justification, it's more about the realities that we're dealing with, and it's about when we roll out new equipment. There is the reality of not being able to roll out 20,000 items at one given time or train 20,000 members at a time. It's not really a justification; it's more a reality, and we're looking at how best we can do that in the safest manner.

When we talk about carbines, for example, we knew we could not stop and train 20,000 people in one week, so we had to figure out the

best way to do that, within the realities and given the risk assessment.

As far as the existing equipment is concerned, yes, absolutely, we do regular training. They go to regular block training, and they get recertified in their existing equipment. It's just when we roll out new equipment that it becomes a bit more problematic.

[Translation]

**Mr. Ramez Ayoub:** Despite what you're saying, the Auditor General noted, in his report, shortcomings in firearms maintenance and officer training. A percentage of officers weren't trained. All kinds of things strike me as worrisome.

Even in Quebec and Ontario, the RCMP had police forces—if I can call them that—that used practically no equipment, that weren't in compliance with the requirements. How come the Auditor General has to be the one to bring these things to light? Internally, do you carry out periodic self-assessments, anything that would allow you to be proactive rather than reactive? Do you have any internal processes in place to detect these kinds of issues, so you don't receive this type of feedback? I don't think I'd be too happy to receive this kind of criticism from the Auditor General. I have the utmost respect for him, but, at the end of the day, these observations could come from anyone.

● (0955)

[English]

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** Absolutely. It's not that we don't welcome any criticism of our systems, but everything that's looked at is a snapshot in time. When we say that 13% of firearms have not been maintained, that's a snapshot in time. If a member gets advised that their pistol needs to be maintained, they will send it in. That one is now not maintained, but they're not carrying a pistol that's not maintained. They get a spare that's maintained. Obviously, the number of those that aren't maintained within that year—

[Translation]

**Mr. Ramez Ayoub:** Are you saying that information should appear in the Auditor General's report? You're explaining the situation to me. You're giving me additional information, but was it shared with Mr. Ricard?

Mr. Ricard, were you aware of that procedure and that information?

**Mr. Sylvain Ricard:** At the risk of sounding like a broken record, yes, it's a

[English]

snapshot at one point in time.

[Translation]

Be that as it may, on that day, during those months, in the preceding months, that was what the audit revealed. That is why this is so important when it comes to recertification. We heard about the challenges, the lack of access to firing ranges and shooting practice. It depends on how many sites are in the area and whether the location is an isolated post. Every organization has to deal with these kinds of challenges.

**Mr. Ramez Ayoub:** That isn't part of your report. That information doesn't appear in your report.

**Mr. Sylvain Ricard:** That is why adequate planning is so important. As managers, we know we have to contend with certain challenges and realities, so we have to plan accordingly. In the case of an isolated post, officers can't be pulled out to receive training elsewhere; otherwise, the area would have no officers. That's something every organization has to deal with. I want to thank the committee for always paying attention to information systems, information quality and proper planning. Those are key issues that, all too often, we flag in our audits.

**Mr. Ramez Ayoub:** Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Ayoub. Those were very good questions.

Mr. Christopherson.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Thank you, Chair.

I want to underscore that we're talking about a lot of data, a lot of detail, and getting in the weeds and that, but let's not lose sight of the fact that the subject matter is about officer safety and public safety. When these things go wrong that are just paperwork for us right now....

That's okay; it's just the House starting—

**The Chair:** Mr. Christopherson, when the RCMP sees flashing lights, they immediately stop.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Exactly. You notice they didn't rush to protect us.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. David Christopherson:** I just wanted to underscore that this is not a good report. I thank my colleague for raising that. The conclusion was that you did not provide all your officers with access to body armour, carbines and the recertification training required to respond to active shooters. We've been kind of quiet and subdued here, but that's because we aren't dealing with dead citizens. We're dealing with policies meant to prevent that, and the policies are not where they should be, so it is still serious.

I want to go to page 8 again. It's been raised a couple of times and I noted it in paragraph 5.37. I had it down as sort of the good, the bad and the ugly. We found that part of the good is that the RCMP had met its target for the initial training of front-line officers on carbines. Congrats for that. That was the good. But 13% of those officers had not completed the annual recertification. We talked about that a bit and that was the bad. We also found that 13% of all officers who were required to carry pistols had not completed their annual pistol recertification, and that's the ugly part.

Paragraph 5.42 underscores that every officer required to carry a pistol on duty must complete the pistol recertification every year. Now that's RCMP policy. Mr. Brennan, I heard you giving kind of a defence of the 13%. But that's your number. It's the RCMP that said this needs to be done once a year. It's not someone from outside saying you have to do this irresponsible and unmanageable thing. These are your own numbers. Now, back in 2005, you were at 23%,

and 14 years later you're at 13%. You're going the right way, but you're still in double digits.

What's the deal? Are you going to meet the darn standard or change it? Please don't keep coming back here failing to meet a standard that you set. Could I have your thoughts, please?

• (1000)

**The Chair:** Mr. Brennan.

**D/Commr Brian Brennan:** Yes, it's the standard we set, and we set it to ensure that our members are proficient in the use of their weapons for their own protection and that of the citizens. My reply is not a defensive reply. It's the reality of our ability to train those members. For example, if I was to recertify today, and a year from now the training schedule for the unit I'm in was not scheduled until June, it would look like I failed to qualify within a year. That would be true. However, in the RCMP's ability to train we are restricted by our access to proper ranges. Usually we train in outdoor facilities. Our training in most of the country is between May and October. We train using a large number of outdoor ranges.

In that regard, our training is limited to about six months a year. We try to push through as many people as possible in that time period. Now, some of those people may not be working during that time. Some are off duty, sick, or on maternity or paternity leave. We haven't washed those numbers down to remove them from the 13%. We are extremely confident that an acceptable number of operational, deployable front-line personnel completes their requalification during that one-year period. It's the reality that we work with. If we could train in facilities 12 months a year, five days a week, we would do that.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** I hear you. I'm trying to be fair-minded about it, but again, it's your number, your system. If you need to put in factors that make a more realistic number, that's fine, but it doesn't make a whole lot of sense to create a measurement, consistently fail in that measurement, and then come up with excuses as to why. I'd rather see a number that's more accurate—maybe 7%—and would be easier to manage. I'm having a real difficulty when you set a standard and don't meet it and then come in and tell me why the number is not as effective as it looks on paper.

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** I think you were right when you said it really is about officer safety. If somebody delays their qualification by a month, they're not vulnerable. The risk is not high that they will not be able to shoot their assailant.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Fair enough, Commissioner. I'm hearing what you're saying, and I'm accepting some of that. As you well know, I have a bit of background in policing. I understand the management side of it, too, and I know how incredibly difficult it is.

That's why I'm perplexed by why you can insist on having a numbers system where you rate yourself, but you're not factoring in your own mitigating factors. If you don't factor them in, then you're creating a number that just causes confusion. On that 13%, I'm thinking, it's not horrible, but it's not good. It should 100%. That's what it's supposed to be.

If there are some variables, put them into the formula so that the number you're giving to the public and reporting to Parliament is an accurate reflection that takes these things into account.

I'm hearing you. I'm trying to be fair-minded and if what you're saying is true and that number is not as accurate because there are nuances, then find a way to factor in those nuances so that when we look at a number, it's a real number.

•(1005)

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** We could easily say, for example, that we only require 75% to qualify, but we want everybody to qualify.

The reality is that, at any given time, the OAG could come in. We will never have 100%. That is the reality, and it's a reality for all police agencies because it's a snapshot in time.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Okay, I hear you.

To me, this just reinforces the need for a police services board. You're raising the point: Should it be 75% or should it be 100%? That's what a police services board would look at and would talk about.

We don't have that in our system. We didn't have it in Ontario. It needs to be fixed. It shouldn't just be one person, the solicitor general or Minister of Public Safety, who has all that responsibility for all this minutiae. There should be an accountability layer. I know the government is starting to bring that in, but it's a somewhat limited mandate from what I can see.

To me, you're arguing against yourself, not me. I'm just trying to find out what the number is. I look at the number the AG gives me, and then you say that number isn't really that number because there is this, this and this, and yet you're the one who created the number and the formula to determine whether you achieve that number or not.

That's all. It just leaves me a little confused. I've taken up most of my time on that. I hope I get another round, because I have one last area I'd like to pursue, if I could.

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.):** I can give you my time.

**The Chair:** You now have your next round.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Thank you very much to my vice-chair colleague. I appreciate that.

On data, your policy on page 10 in paragraph 5.53 says:

RCMP policy states that pistols and carbines must be sent to the armoury for preventive maintenance every three years or after every 5,000 rounds fired, whichever comes first.

Then it turns out that you don't keep track of how many rounds are fired on each firearm. So what's the deal? Why do you maintain a policy that says, either this threshold or that threshold, but we only measure one threshold anyway? Why do you have a policy like that?

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** I'm going to refer that question to Mr. Watters.

**Mr. Dennis Watters:** Initially, when we were having discussions with the OAG, we did mention to them that we will amend the policy and remove that 5,000 rounds. The 5,000 rounds criterion was there years ago because we had a lot of members who were doing competitive shooting and going to shows, but now our general duty members don't do that any more.

Essentially the 5,000 rounds issue is a moot point. We don't track the rounds anymore, but, as we told the Auditor General, we will change the policy to remove that because it is no longer relevant.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** I should probably know this, but I confess I don't. Is there a deadline in your action plan to have that done?

**Mr. Dennis Watters:** It will be done very shortly, I can tell you. We can do that. It won't take long for us to do that.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Just to reinforce—and I'll end here—the chair's message about data and data collection, it's also making sure we interpret it properly. When we see policy, especially for the RCMP.... You have to cut a little slack for some outfits that just don't have the means, but you do, so when we see some of the lack of planning and redundancy in policies like this.... I'm glad to hear that it's being caught, but I'm somewhat troubled that something like that would still be there at this stage and that it took the Auditor General's report to flush it out.

Luckily we have a system that does that, but to reinforce this—and I hope the next Parliament continues to make this a priority—we've been doing this for a number of decades now, collecting information. As Mr. Ferguson used to say, we've become very good at collecting information; we're just not very good at using it. That's why we're continuously pushing on this. It doesn't generate headlines. It's not very sexy politically, but it is the key and cornerstone to proper governance and management.

On balance, again, as a citizen, especially as I take leave of the public stage, I do offer again, as we always do, our thanks for the work of the police officers and everybody in the RCMP.

But this is not a good report, and you can do better. I know that going forward you will do better for Canadians. Hopefully, when there's a follow-up report in a few years, it will look a little better than the one that we're following up from 2005.

Thank you, Commissioner.

Thank you, Auditor General.

Thank you, Chair.

•(1010)

**The Chair:** Thank you all.

There are just a couple of quick little questions. I don't have anyone else on the speakers list.

The Auditor General's report says that in 2018 there were 18,000 RCMP officers. Today you have used the number 20,000. Is that indeed the number? That sounds good. We were worried about recruits and keeping up with the attrition rate. Are we at 20,000? What is the plan for the next few years? This is a little outside the parameters of the report, but just comment on that, please.

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** Those are great questions.

We're just over 20,000. I don't have the exact number. We are continuing to put through 40 troops per year at the RCMP academy, which translates into about 1,200 new graduates per year with the attrition.

We've been working hard at our vacancy rates, and we're pleased that in this fiscal year we'll be down to around a 1.5% vacancy rate. We are still exploring strategies to deal with soft vacancies such as members off duty sick, or on paternity leave or maternity leave, because that also is affecting us. It doesn't reflect in the vacancy numbers officially because the position has a body in it, but the body is just not at the office.

**The Chair:** I live in a small rural community where a number of years ago, there was an RCMP shooting incident. Two RCMP officers were shot and injured. Luckily, they were not killed, although there was a fatality in the shooting.

We hear a lot about overtime in the RCMP. I think sometimes RCMP officers depend on overtime and look forward to those extra hours.

Does the lack of resources play into this audit at all? You've mentioned a number of times that people were off on maternity leave and others were off sick, and maybe some of the recertification didn't happen.

I can tell you that sergeants or commanding officers in some of these detachments fear maternity leave because it leaves the detachment short. Does that play into this as well, as far as the recertification is concerned, because we just couldn't send someone to be recertified?

**Commr Brenda Lucki:** It affects the numbers when we count, as Deputy Commissioner Brennan alluded to, because they are operational members, but they're just not at work at that snapshot

in time. That's one way it affects us, but obviously, there is a lot of planning that has to come into effect when you have the maternity leave and paternity leave options.

As I said, we have a short window for recertifications. For example, when I was in charge of northern Manitoba, we would have relief members so that the members we put up there could come down to do their training, because they shouldn't be missing training opportunities while they're up in the north.

Obviously, we do have...where we can bring people in on relief. We use overtime, but again, we have to be aware of the mental wellness of our members as well. We don't want everything to rely on the overtime solution.

**The Chair:** This is the second or third time of leaving it in the committee's hands. The second or third time that I go into the final comments trying to summarize everything up and all of a sudden hands start shooting up and they want to come forward. I'm probably not going to today, but I do just want to finish this up by saying this committee takes very seriously the jobs that it's called to do. Sometimes it deals with straight data. Sometimes it deals with delivery of programs, money, accountability, transparency, cost saving.

Today we're dealing with lives typically and management practices. These have real consequences. For example, in the case that we're looking at today, I'm not sure if it was an Auditor General's report or an internal review that you did, but in 2011, the RCMP officers, in an analysis, recognized that they did not have the firearms they needed for proper safety and for delivery of public safety. That was in 2011. There were three deaths in 2014, and when the mandated review took place in December of that very same year, they found out that a lot of the reason was that the Moncton officers did not have the necessary body armour. Then later the court finds that the RCMP is guilty of not providing adequate equipment, including maybe the carbines. That's in 2019. Now the Auditor General says that we still don't have it where we would like to see it. That's why this committee is here.

This committee is here to make certain that proper process is followed. That's why Mr. Christopherson is drilling in on 13%. It could be 30%; it could be 3%. The Auditor General has been clear. It is process followed. Are the best management practices followed? That's what we care about.



Today we ask ourselves, should we believe that this time the RCMP brass will, in effect, heed the Auditor General's recommendation? We see in the action plan that they have, and indeed I see some timelines of April 2019. We've already met those, so we're encouraged by that. Again, we follow up on this and we want to be certain when we look at this next time that we have bettered our past numbers, and it's because of the Auditor General's report, it's because of the public accounts report, it's because of the RCMP brass taking this very seriously and following through.

• (1015)

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Point of privilege.

**The Chair:** Go ahead.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Thanks, Chair.

This is a strong committee and we have a lot of authority to put people through some pretty tough times. We ask our staff that if we're wronging anyone, to let us know. Earlier I put a lot of blame on Treasury Board not doing their challenge function. Dillan, our

analyst, was good enough to point out to me that in this particular case, because of the process that was followed, it wouldn't have been in front of Treasury Board. So there was no Treasury Board challenge function to be had. So my criticizing it was completely wrong and I withdraw that and apologize. That was incorrect. They did nothing wrong in this regard.

I wanted to correct the record. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Christopherson. You won't be sanctioned with any loss of speaking time in the future.

We thank the Auditor General's office for appearing before us today as well as the RCMP.

Let me say to all parties, and to all members of this committee, thank you. I think today we had very good questions as we always do.

The meeting is adjourned.

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