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Chair

The Honourable John McKay

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• (1540)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.)): Okay, ladies and gentlemen, let's get this meeting started. This is the 130th meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

As our first witness on rural crime and motion M-167, we have the Honourable Georgina Jolibois, one of our colleagues.

Welcome to the committee. I certainly don't need to explain to you how a committee works. I'll just let you proceed in the normal fashion, with 10 minutes for your presentation, and afterwards colleagues will ask questions.

Thank you.

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Good afternoon, everyone. *Mahsi cho.*

I'd like to start by thanking the committee for taking the time to study the issue of crime in rural and remote areas and for asking me to be a witness today. My name is Georgina Jolibois, and I'm the member of Parliament for the Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River riding.

Before becoming an MP, I served as the mayor of La Loche, Saskatchewan, for 12 years, and I spent 10 years working with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police F Division's aboriginal advisory committee.

For most of my life, I've lived in Saskatchewan's north, and in both a professional and personal capacity, I have seen and experienced the impacts of the policing system in rural northern Saskatchewan. To give you some perspective, my riding is as big as Poland but with a much smaller population. That population is largely first nations and Métis, and our communities are spread across large areas of the north.

In many of the communities in my riding, there are only a handful of RCMP officers or local police officers who are meant to serve the community and the surrounding area. These officers are stretched to their limits quite often, as multiple calls each day will require them to evaluate events with incomplete information, prioritize their responses, and make difficult decisions based on the resources they have available to them.

I sympathize with the victims of crime in our communities, knowing that the economy of police work leaves them behind. When

we hear the statistics that are being discussed about crime in rural Canada, they seem to paint an inaccurate picture of imagined chaos and lawlessness in our small towns. That sentiment empowers vigilance in the name of self-defence. These statistics highlight isolation under the guise of abandonment, and they create division when there is so much effort for the sake of unity.

We shouldn't take these feelings for granted and dismiss them as inaccurate. After all, that is the lived experience of many people in rural Canada. Our response, then, needs to reconcile that feeling of abandonment with the reality of progress that's being made by our communities. It's our duty to do what we can to bridge that gap between the feelings of our constituents and the efforts of our municipalities, band councils, the police, and the RCMP.

I do remain optimistic that the discussions that this committee is engaging in will lead to a better future for both law enforcement and the people who live in rural and northern communities.

It goes without saying, I hope, that it would be wrong for us to conclude that the RCMP and police forces are alone to blame for both the real and perceived failures of the policing system in rural and northern communities.

A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to meet with Commissioner Brenda Lucki of the RCMP, who told me about several of the initiatives that the RCMP is taking to better serve rural and northern areas. The Commissioner told me how important it is to make sure that their rural detachments and northern detachments are fully staffed, and that staff levels in rural and northern Canada are prioritized over urban settings. Furthermore, she stressed that part of her mandate is to review the process of filling detachments across the country, and that finding a balance between urban and rural detachments is something the commissioner is actively working toward.

One of the major concerns with regard to staffing is the relief structure that the RCMP has in place. I've been told that, given the limited staff in rural and northern communities, it can be difficult on a detachment and community if a single officer or staffer were to take a leave or take a vacation. I would encourage the committee to examine this relief system further.

I've also spoken with a number of officers and community officials, who are doing amazing work with the resources they have available to them. In the community of Stony Rapids, Saskatchewan, for example, local RCMP officers have developed a unique strategy to limit bootlegging within the community. In other communities, law enforcement has developed profile management programs that identify past offenders and monitor their activities to caution them against reoffending. I've also seen a number of advancements in the use of information technology to the benefit of law enforcement.

In Saskatchewan, many rural and northern officers communicate using an app on their phones to monitor suspicious behaviour reported by civilians to position themselves in the event of an emergency.

There are a number of programs like these across the province and the country. I applaud the efforts of law enforcement in developing them and thank the communities for adopting them. Projects like these rely on community support, because at the end of the day the RCMP alone cannot manage a crime reduction program; it can only be one part of its future.

I would encourage the members of this committee to reach out to their local RCMP, find out what sorts of projects they're working on and ask them directly what has been successful. In many cases, you'll find that the people working on the ground will be able to provide better solutions than those who are not.

Speaking of community, I'd also like to talk about how municipalities and bands are using their resources to address crime in their community. We all know that what motivates a person to commit a crime is a complex network of decisions and conditions that have led them to a certain point in their life. Communities are aware of that fact. In addition to social programs, they are actively investing in crime reduction and crime management programs across Canada. Municipalities invest in after-school programs for vulnerable youth, anti-gang strategies, drug and alcohol advocacy, and support systems for people when they get out of prison. The same is true of rural communities.

With the rise of incidents in rural Saskatchewan, communities in my riding have begun investing more of their limited resources in community safety and peacekeeping initiatives. For example, the community of Pelican Narrows has successfully put in place a peacekeepers program through which trained individuals, who are not police, will monitor their community for incidents and respond where appropriate. Peacekeeping officers take a six-week training program, at a cost to the community, and make their community safer. Programs like these are successful and I would encourage the committee to study them further.

I would like to point out that community safety and peacekeeping programs do come at a cost to the community that funds them. Municipalities and first nations' communities operate on severely limited budgets already, and when forced to shift their focus towards security, the community will sacrifice much-needed social programming to compensate.

I would further advise the members of this committee that investments in policing and community safety programs are one part of a crime reduction strategy that involves social programming. A

government cannot effectively invest in security without also investing in community.

To conclude, I'd like to emphasize to the committee that the relationship between police and the community they serve is vital to the success of any safety or policing initiative. The word "rural" does not mean "alone", and "remote" does not mean "isolated". Communities whose members listen to one another and who understand each other's backgrounds and ways of life lead to more peaceful communities. I would caution the committee in being too reactive to stories they see in the media and advise that the priorities of one group not be placed over the needs of another. Having safe communities is in everyone's best interest. The way we choose to build that community and enforce that value of togetherness will determine how successful the results of any initiatives in rural crime will be.

Thank you.

● (1545)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Jolibois.

Our first questioner is Ms. Dabrusin.

You have seven minutes, please.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Thank you very much for coming today.

I was interested to see that you were coming today because I had looked at your notes of what you had said when this motion was before the House. I noticed today you focused a lot on the language we use about isolation, rural, and how we use words.

You raise the question of how the term "rural crime" can be interpreted differently by different people. I was wondering if you might be able to talk with us a little more about that, because it will be important when we get to the report writing stage.

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: First of all, thank you for that question.

I'd like to make clear that I'm here to talk about community public safety. I'm not interested in having a discussion about one group being more at risk than another group. I see an equal footing when I talk about community public safety. The detachments in our rural and northern communities are there to serve us equally. My public safety is as important as that of the next person who reports a crime involving a property-related offence or an assault or another offence. It's really crucial. The elders have taught me over the years and teach communities and the youth about the importance of having key working relationships between law enforcement and communities to come up with solutions together.

● (1550)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I think that was clear from what you said in your opening statement. It was because you really put out.... What you said is that the phrase "rural crime" does not mean crime in rural Canada; rather, to many it means crime by indigenous people committed against non-indigenous people. That's what I see in your statement. I wanted to clarify, because words are important, and we're going to be asked to address them.

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: Words are really important, but if you look at the whole context, it was to make a point that everyone's safety is of utmost importance.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Absolutely.

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: I'm not engaging in any discussion in which one group is creating more division or creating more problems for one group over another.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: That's a good flag for us as we go through this report. I appreciate your setting that as a flag.

Another thing you said was to look at different community ideas and what might be working in various communities. When you were making your speech in the House, you referred to a few different programs. I thought maybe you could tell us more about those programs and what we should be looking at.

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: What specific kinds of programs?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I was actually going to.... Give me one second.

You talked about having attended the New North Northern Justice Symposium. When you were there, you referred to the northeast youth violence reduction partnership.

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: That would be in the community of Pelican Narrows in the region on the northeast side of northern Saskatchewan.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Is that the same thing as the peacekeeping thing that you were talking about?

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: It is one of the initiatives that the band is undertaking. The approach they have undertaken there is a key community policing initiative, with a key relationship with the RCMP to look at various initiatives for the community. If criminal activity is occurring, the community can report easily to the police, and with a better relationship with the police, there are improved services available.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: That's interesting, because one thing being talked about when I was looking and preparing for today—and we'll be hearing from the RCMP next—was various initiatives that they are taking in Alberta. They received increased funding from the province to undertake some policing efforts specific to rural areas. I don't know whether you've had a chance to look at any of that or have any comments about what has been happening. It's really just this year that these programs have been put into effect.

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: As the member of Parliament for the Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River riding, I'm keenly interested in northern Saskatchewan and the province of Saskatchewan. It would be very helpful if my provincial government did the same as the Alberta government, which has given funds to support various initiatives at the community level. We don't have that same thing happening in Saskatchewan.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: We might be able to ask the RCMP a little bit more about that as well when we go into the next hour. That's helpful, because there are differences in funding policing in various provinces. It's interesting to see that part of it.

In your statement you talked about the need for enough resources for police. You focused on that as well in your speech when you were in the House. Do you know how the funding of the police in

your area, northern Saskatchewan, happens? What is the funding formula for police in northern Saskatchewan?

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: I can't speak to the funding formula. I can speak to resources offered in northern Saskatchewan from the RCMP, and then there are the provincial justice programs that occur, with a smaller amount in terms of funding.

In the federal RCMP in northern Saskatchewan, there's the F Division that is responsible for the whole of the province, and the north district of F Division is responsible for the northern part of the province.

The services that the RCMP provides are not so many. The lack of funding in various special areas does not allow for communities to have the opportunity for calling the RCMP to investigate a crime under the Highway Traffic Act, for example. That comes out of North Battleford, I believe, for the entire north. The criminal investigation team for specialized fields either comes out of Prince Albert, Saskatoon, or North Battleford, when they are called upon. With regard to the drug enforcement team, again, not every community in the whole riding has those services. They can only stretch themselves so far, so they're not available in every community—

• (1555)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Sorry; my time is almost up. I guess I'll say that our focus is also going to have to be on how the provinces are funding police services as well, and then how that gets arranged.

Thank you for that.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Dabrusin.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul-Hus, the floor is yours for seven minutes.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will be sharing my time with Mr. Motz.

[English]

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: I'm sorry, but the translation was really low. I need you to speak up a bit.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Is that better?

[English]

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: Not you, the translator.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: Okay, let's try this again.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you for appearing before us, Ms. Jolibois.

We often talk about the duality of francophones and anglophones, but there is also the duality of rural and urban areas. The committee members from the Liberal Party come mostly from cities. During the deliberations to determine the number of meetings we would have to hold for this study, our Liberal friends decided that three meetings would be enough to fully explore the issue. Do you think that's the case?

[English]

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: Absolutely not. The way that I understand Canada from coast to coast to coast is that it's a vast country. There is the east to the west, the cities, the urban centres, the rural settings, but the northern parts of the provinces and the Far North, the first nations and Métis and Inuit, require to be consulted because of the way the programs and services are provided at the federal level, such as the RCMP. Their needs have to be considered, and the languages and the challenges they face.

I would support more discussions if there isn't a northern portion of first nations, Métis and Inuit and rural in there. I would encourage that.

Thank you.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Colleagues from the United Conservative Party of Alberta have conducted a study on their own to try to understand the issue of rural crime. You are from Saskatchewan. The problem seems to be most prevalent in the central and western provinces, while the situation seems to be less of a concern in Quebec and Ontario.

Do you think that's because of the policing context? For example, Ontario has its own provincial police force. The neighbouring province has the Sûreté du Québec. However, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police has a very broad mandate that covers all of Canada. We tend to rush to blame them, but I think the problem is that the country is vast, as you said.

Do you think Alberta and Saskatchewan should do things differently and have provincial police forces, or do you think that wouldn't change anything?

[English]

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: I like to be clear. I think this motion that came forward to the House of Commons was because of the outcome of the Colten Boushie family situation. That's my understanding, and the understanding of many Canadians across Canada.

I want to be clear again. I'm not interested in having discussions about the lives of first nations, Métis and Inuit being further at risk. That said, policing across Canada is a concern. All Canadians must and should have equal access to the RCMP, municipal services, across Canada.

It's really important. You may not say it, but I've heard that this motion came about because of this situation, and that's not acceptable.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: The motion deals with rural crime in general. This problem affects First Nations as much as it does the rest of the population. We want to know why there is more crime in

rural areas, especially in Alberta, Saskatchewan and perhaps Manitoba. We are not here to accuse anyone. We simply want to understand the problem and see what measures need to be taken to better protect the public.

• (1600)

[English]

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: I believe, again, that I'm here to discuss this very important issue that in terms of policing and the policing service, every citizen must have equal access to the RCMP and programs that are available.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Motz.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Ms. Jolibois, thank you for being here.

Just so you know, the Alberta MPs from the rural areas of my province began this study about 18 months ago, and it was related to the huge increase we've seen in rural crime throughout our province. It was not specific to anything more than urban centre criminals branching out and preying on those in the country, and that's where it started for us.

I met with my officials from the Blood reserve. They speak about the first nations policing program. I was alarmed to hear that it was a 30-year-old program, or older, that hasn't changed in any way. It should be considered as an emergency service, a required service, in a lot of the first nations communities.

I would be interested to know your views on first nations policing. I know from my discussions with law enforcement officials from across the country that they suggest the RCMP may need to consider reworking how they do some of their work. I know that many first nations rely on the RCMP to augment the needs they have on reserve.

I would like to know from you whether first nations policing has the tools to succeed. What do we need to do to ensure that we can better support first nations policing?

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: Again, I want to emphasize this. From coast to coast to coast, in all parts of Canada, for a citizen in Iqaluit or in Canwood or in Regina, Saskatchewan, or in northern B.C., for us as Canadian citizens, the RCMP and municipal services exist for our community and public safety. When we need assistance, we call law enforcement to help us. That's the approach that I've engaged in discussions on and worked on through my experience.

My discussions with the RCMP and elders and first nations and communities are about community policing and working together. How can we address this together, and not as one group separate from another? I want to clarify that the discussions around increased funding, from the RCMP to municipal services to first nations and other groups, is always a must. Canada must support that.

Mr. Glen Motz: I have one quick question. From your experience in your riding, what kinds of rural crimes are you experiencing in your riding as they increase? Is it property crime or crimes against people? What are you seeing as an increase in the rural crime going on in your community?

The Chair: Sorry. Mr. Motz has gone over his time.

I'd like to be relaxed on this. Could you answer that question in 10 seconds, or do you want to save it for another time?

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: We'll get to the next question, because it

The Chair: Okay.

[Translation]

Ms. Moore, you have the floor for seven minutes.

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

You come from northern Saskatchewan and I come from northern Quebec. Although our communities are different, they are both northern. Every time we talk, I realize the extent to which we are experiencing similar problems and situations. Although Canada is a vast country, I think we share many of the same concerns.

One of the issues specific to rural areas is the fact that police officers live in the community. Everyone knows them, knows who they are, knows their children and knows where they live. As a result, when incidents involving police officers disturb public opinion, it becomes extremely difficult to deal with. For example, in my area, in La Sarre, a year ago, the police had to go after someone in a hit and run. He was in crisis and threatened the police with a knife. They shot him and he unfortunately died. This event prompted a shock wave in the community.

How can we develop programs that inspire the trust of communities in their police forces and foster co-operation with the provincial police, the RCMP or indigenous police forces? What can we do to ensure that communities co-operate effectively with police forces?

• (1605)

[English]

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: In my experiences over the years of working with the Saskatoon Police Service as well as with the aboriginal advisory committee with the RCMP, and in my experiences in working with the Saskatchewan RCMP and having met with Commissioner Brenda Lucki and having similar discussions with her, I have heard about various incidents involving the relationship between the RCMP and municipal services and communities. That's why I advocate and support community policing.

When I say "community policing", I'm meaning that the RCMP is invested in the communities and that the Saskatoon Police Service or other municipalities' services are invested in the communities, that the elders and the leadership in the communities are invested in the communities. The best way to overcome hardships or difficult situations in dealing with circumstances such as you laid out is using the circle, coming together and building the community, talking to each other and going through the process.

My friends over the years, and the police officers with whom I formed relationships—they're indigenous people and non-indigenous people—say the same thing when they enter our communities and work with our communities. The best way for us to solve these issues together is.... Yes, we need the resources and the support, but

we must still be engaged in discussions together to tackle the criminal activity that is going on.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Moore: Basically, you can't run a police station in a rural area without working with all the local players who are not part of the police world. There must be a lot of communication between all the local players, compared to elsewhere, where it may not be as important.

[English]

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: From my experience working with the senior leadership over the years and meeting with Commissioner Brenda Lucki and the north district within the RCMP, the Depot academy, and various senior leaders, I would say that the local RCMP officers who are serving our communities require our support as well. They require the support of the community members to help them solve crime.

If there's no working relationship, the criminal activity any community may have experienced cannot be resolved. It's important that the RCMP feel they can trust the community and that the community can also trust the RCMP or municipal service—it goes both ways—in order to solve crimes together.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Moore: Of all the indigenous policing models that you've seen in the past, were there any that were particularly effective?

[English]

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: In my experience in working with the Saskatoon Police Service as well as the RCMP, I was sitting on the committee when two police officers were shot, one indigenous and one non-indigenous. When I was sitting on the committee, so was one of the fathers of the killed RCMP officers. The elder has passed away since then, but he and other indigenous police officers within the force, and non-indigenous officers, have guided the process to work through these difficult circumstances.

In my experiences across Canada in talking to indigenous people and communities, working together is crucial and resources are crucial.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Moore: I have one last question.

In the communities in the region where I come from, they are currently trying to recruit more indigenous police officers, but it is difficult. Not many young people think about a career in policing.

I would like to know whether you have any solutions or tips to encourage more indigenous people to join the police force, to consider a career in policing.

• (1610)

[English]

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: In the models I'm familiar with, the RCMP and the Saskatoon Police Service have aboriginal advisory committees working with the leadership of those police forces and tackling the very tough issues.

Why are there not indigenous people joining the forces? First of all, the RCMP is struggling in attracting indigenous people to join the police force, as are the municipal police forces. The application system is lengthy and the process is detailed. The applicant requires assistance in going through the process.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Moore.

Thank you, Ms. Jolibois.

Mr. Picard, you have seven minutes, please.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Picard (Montarville, Lib.): Thank you.

First, Ms. Jolibois, I don't think anyone here is challenging equal rights. No one disputes the fact that all Canadians, without distinction, are entitled to the same protection. I think this notion is clear to everyone.

That being said, the study focuses on rural crime. Although one of your comments is about police services, the nature of the policing, it is important to understand that policing must meet a specific need, apart, of course, from the distance between the various municipalities. Your constituency is as big as Poland. A number of members of Parliament represent constituencies as large as a European country. That is not disputed either.

We must be able to identify the particularity, the characteristic that defines rural crime. Clearly, if that type of crime is not so different from crime in the suburbs or cities, it means that the policing is not managed in the same way.

We have received comments about how different rural areas are from urban areas. Are you able to explain this distinction to us or to clarify the characteristics of what is known as rural crime?

[English]

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: Again, it's services.

I must emphasize that law enforcement agencies in northern and rural parts require services. There's a requirement for more members and for the equipment to operate the detachments, to make sure that the RCMP has the resources it needs to deal with various criminal activities that are experienced in cities or anywhere else in Canada. Communities that are willing to participate in working within their communities.... If a community is not willing to do its part in working with the RCMP, let's say, is not going anywhere. In the experience of elders and indigenous communities, they require funding for the victim services program and they require funding for the peacekeepers program. They require funding for seatbelt programs and child safety programs. For example, another criminal activity for which every community requires assistance, from rural to north to urban centres, is property crime. Every community requires funding more resources to help officers with property crime or vandalism at various levels. Again, without resources, you can't do your job.

Mr. Michel Picard: I understand your concern about the quality of services rendered to your communities. However, is the type of criminality we have in rural environments different from what we have in the suburbs and cities? Am I right to understand that your only perspective is to realize that the nature of the criminality seems

to be same, that we have the same issues and we have the same problems in the same proportion?

In our case, the main question may be whether the resources available to us assure us that the service is the same as anywhere else. At the end of the day, from your point of view, do we just need more people?

• (1615)

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: It's resources.

It is a known fact across Canada that urban centres and suburban areas have effective programs and services to offer to their residents. As we further trickle out to rural areas and the north, a community is lucky if they even have a police officer. A community is lucky if they even have a peace officer program or even a victim services program. The more you trickle out, it is pretty obvious. I suggest that you look further to look for research and details and you will see that in a community in Iqaluit or a community in Yellowknife or in other places, the services and programs and funding for resources and equipment and other various things aren't available.

Mr. Michel Picard: Are you suggesting that the cut we have observed in the last government, cutting the resources and budget for the RCMP in rural environments is not the right way to support communities?

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: I'm not suggesting anything. I'm painting a picture of what I see between rural, northern and urban centres.

Mr. Michel Picard: Yes, but you're suggesting a reduction of resources.

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: You are providing various assumptions based on your experiences and where you come from as an MP. That experience is different from where I come from in Saskatchewan and my working experiences with the RCMP and the municipal police forces.

Mr. Michel Picard: From your perspective, have you realized the offer of more resources over the years?

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: Again, I want to be clear. I'm saying resources for law enforcement, yes, but also resources for communities to offer community-based programs so that the communities and the RCMP and other municipal police forces are engaging in meaningful discussions.

Mr. Michel Picard: However, you are on the field. You are in your riding. You are among your people. You've seen what's going on. What have you seen?

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: Again, for me to acquire services of an RCMP officer in one setting, I still need to call 911 and it transfers me to Regina.

Mr. Michel Picard: That's not my question.

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: Again, you're not clearly understanding what life is like in our communities.

The Chair: We're going to have to move on to see whether Mr. Picard will have a clear understanding later on.

Go ahead, Mr. Eglinski, please. You have five minutes.

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Thank you.

I'm not sure if it's Mrs. or Ms. Jolibois, but we'll just leave it at that: colleague.

Your points are very well taken here. Having spent 35 years in aboriginal policing, from day one until the end, I feel what you're saying. It takes a special police officer to have good liaison with the community that he's policing, especially an aboriginal community. It takes a person who needs to want to work and interact with that community. As well, it takes outside resources, other than police officers, to make things work.

Someone just talked about resources, and I'm going to throw some figures at you.

If you look at the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut, their policing numbers are 333 per 100,000; 411 per 100,000; and 353 per 100,000 population. Therefore, there are a lot of police officers per the resources. Then you go to the rest of Canada, including Saskatchewan, and we're all sitting at between about 175 to 200 police officers per 100,000 population. This is the situation that you are talking about, getting people out to the rural areas, the remote rural areas, and the remote areas that require going through to Regina to get a police officer.

It's totally relevant when you look at those numbers, extremely high numbers, 411 to 100,000 in the Northwest Territories, paid for by federal funding. If you look at those numbers that are paid by federal funding, they're very high. Then you look at where they're paid for by the provincial governments, and they're all, in some cases, half of what the federal government is supplying.

If you look at the crime stats over the last year, Northwest Territory, Yukon and Nunavut went up 1% and 2%, whereas if you look at most of the provinces, they went up anywhere from, on average, 5% to 6% with the lower number of police officers per 100,000 population, so it's a very clear picture.

• (1620)

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: It's a clear picture to whom?

Mr. Jim Eglinski: It's a clear picture that more police officers will give you more resources and the crime rate will drop. What you're saying is that you want to see better policing services for the remote communities. My question to you—

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: I want to clarify, though. That's not what I'm saying. I'm asking that every community have resources available to them, be it in law enforcement or community-based programs. In rural parts of Canada, they go through the same experiences as a northern community.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: That's correct.

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: In phoning for assistance, for RCMP services, again, they get the same. It's the distance, the location of where the activities are. That is a concern. If there's only one officer, yes, he needs the support, and this is where again the community policing—

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Let me finish my question, then.

How do you see us doing it better?

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: Community policing is really important. That's why, if there is a working relationship between communities,

the communities can assist the RCMP to enforce the situation they're dealing with.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: But if they are—

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: That's how I see it.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: If they are working with the police officer, are you saying, then, that every community should have a police officer there? That's what you're saying in a roundabout way.

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: Again, it's the structure of the RCMP. That would be a question for the RCMP and the federal government, the way the structure is set up across Canada. It's a systematic structure in place. No matter what I say and suggest, I'm just one voice, just as you are, and again, the way the structures are set up is a bigger question, and a bigger discussion needs to occur.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: You have no rationale, then, for how we could do it to make it better in the way you want it.

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: Again, look at the way the structures are set up and have those discussions among yourselves.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Eglinski.

I take note that you seem to be making reference to Statistics Canada information. Is that correct?

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Yes, that is correct.

The Chair: I would assume that colleagues would all benefit from the availability of that material.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: It's in my notes. I assume it's in their notes, or I was hoping so.

The Chair: I think it's from the Library of Parliament.

Could I ask the analyst to...?

Okay, it was done, and colleagues got it.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: It's Police Resources in Canada, dated 2017, with release date March 28, 2018.

The Chair: I just wanted to make sure that the committee was aware of what you were reporting.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: The data is all in there.

The Chair: Mr. Fragiskatos, welcome back to the committee.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): It's great to be back.

Thank you very much, Ms. Jolibois, for your presentation.

In any study of rural crime, I think it's natural that we discuss approaches to dealing with rural crime, and you have put some ideas on the table. I want to ask you this, however, because you're from Saskatchewan.

In the latter days of his term as premier, Brad Wall formed a caucus committee to study matters relating to this issue, matters relating to rural crime in Saskatchewan. They were tasked with making recommendations.

The recommendations they came back with are classic tough-on-crime approaches—for example, stronger penalties for young offenders and an increase in license plate recognition systems.

This differed dramatically from what the caucus committee heard from, for example, the Federation of Indigenous Sovereign Nations, which suggested, for example, that the way to deal with rural crime is to put in place community justice programs.

You focused a little bit on that in your testimony today, but to be more specific, the federation was talking about the expansion of anti-gang crime prevention programs for youth. Where you have seen such programs put into place in Saskatchewan, can you talk about your thoughts on them and how effective they have been in mitigating the chance for young people to turn to crime, and offer any thoughts on those matters?

• (1625)

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: I'm curious, as you were describing your question and laying it out, to know who is committing the crime? Is the committee or are others implying that one group is doing...?

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: I'm not implying anything. I'm just asking you what your thoughts on—

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: I just want to be clear on that, because the way the questions get laid out—

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: No, I'm not implying—

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: Again, a criminal activity is a criminal activity, from organized crime to various criminal activities that go on.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: No, let me be clear—

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: I'll be clear that I am not talking about one particular group carrying out crime. I'm talking about your experience in observing programs for youth. It could be anti-gang programs. It could be any crime prevention programs or anything you've seen that differs from a tough-on-crime agenda that you think would be effective in preventing young people in particular from turning to crime. I'm not just talking about indigenous youth; I'm talking about all youth.

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: Okay.

Again—

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: I'm asking for specific examples of programs in particular locations.

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: Again, I don't want to talk about specific programs, because the way the funding structure plays, for a pilot project in some place in northern Saskatchewan or a pilot project in Quebec or some other part in Canada, there is one initiative, and then they have to look at whether the funding sources will be made available throughout Canada for other communities to participate.

The experiences I have learned from in being involved with the aboriginal advisory committee again stress building relationships. I think the idea of "relationship" is being misunderstood. If I know who the staff sergeant is in a detachment, then if I witness an incident, I'd rather talk to the staff sergeant and get an answer from them, because it requires attention.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: I understand very well the importance of relationships, but I think it would serve the committee very well if you had particular examples of programs that you've come across. I know you served as mayor in La Loche—

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: Again, in my presentation—

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Is there anything that you could suggest that the committee could learn from—

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: Again, in my presentation I've alluded to a few—the community safety officer, the peacekeeper positions in various communities—

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Why have they been so effective? I guess that's what I'm driving at.

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: Again, resources to communities to allow.... Without a resource.... For example, you're a member of Parliament. If you were not getting paid, would you do your work? It's the same thing.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: I'm glad to be getting paid, yes.

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: Would you allow...? How many volunteer hours can you provide to do this piece? You still need to have a job to carry on, to pay your bills.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: I just wanted to know more about what these programs are all about and how they function.

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: I would consult with the RCMP and municipal police forces because that's where they would have the information.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Okay. I see I'm at five minutes.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: You are at five minutes.

We started a little late, so I'm going to allow one more round of questions. Then, before we suspend, we have a couple of pieces of committee business. I'll invite Ms. Jolibois to leave, and then we have the RCMP.

Do you have no questions?

Mr. Glen Motz: I have no questions.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. McKinnon.

Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Yes, thank you.

The Chair: You have five minutes.

Mr. Ron McKinnon: You spoke of the need for equal law enforcement access across Canada from coast to coast to coast, and I think this builds on what Mr. Eglinski was saying. What does that look like?

Law enforcement, I think, will need to be different in rural areas and rural communities than it is in urban environments. The communities are smaller and the people are more widespread in where they live. The cost of policing is quite different. What kind of benchmarks are you looking for to say that we have equal access to law enforcement in your communities, let's say, or various places in your riding, as compared to somewhere else in Canada?

• (1630)

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: It's based on my experiences and my understanding, and this is why I say all Canadians should and must have equal access to the RCMP or a municipal police force.

Mr. Ron McKinnon: But what does that mean?

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: If a criminal activity occurring, they go through the same process under what the law is. Again, they look at the officer investigating, but then they look at whether there is support for victim services, for victims of crime. What kind of support is there at the community level? Again, it's community-based programs.

In the city—

Mr. Ron McKinnon: So you're not talking about response times

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: The way I understand it is the way I'm—

Mr. Ron McKinnon: I've heard these answers already from you.

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: I'm reiterating my answers and clarifying, because I feel that there's not an understanding of the reality on the ground.

Mr. Ron McKinnon: I don't think that's the problem. I guess we're just looking for some clarity around specifically what you're looking for.

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: Again, it's resources for all.

Mr. Ron McKinnon: If you're in a remote community and there's a crime, unless there's a police officer stationed just down the block, you're not going to get the same kind of response time as you would in a city. Is that the sort of thing you're looking for, the same kind of response time that you get in the city, or do you accept that in a rural environment there are going to be differences in response times and a difference in staffing levels? Is it that generally speaking, at some point in the process, you need to know that those various services that are available in urban areas are also available in rural areas?

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: To have that discussion, how realistic is it for our Canadian government to change up the policing system that's in place? There's probably very little chance of that occurring. Then there is the way the RCMP is laid out and what the senior level has to do in terms of redistributing and distributing the availability of detachments and members. Are we prepared to have that discussion here in Canada?

Mr. Ron McKinnon: Let's not worry about how the chess pieces move. What is it you expect?

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: For me, I am because—

Mr. Ron McKinnon: What are you trying to achieve?

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: For me, I am. If something is occurring, I need to phone the RCMP. I want to have the same access to the RCMP as you would.

Mr. Ron McKinnon: So what does that mean?

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: That's what I'm hearing from my riding.

Mr. Ron McKinnon: Do you want a five-minute response time?

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: I'm not giving you a clear answer on that because even in the city, if they're tied up with a crime or an incident, they can't get their.... It could be the same amount of time even if it's in a rural or northern.... Every situation is different.

Again, as a resident, I need help from the RCMP. I phone and I want the RCMP to come and see me or come to the incident.

Mr. Ron McKinnon: Right, but I guess I'm still not seeing clarity in what you mean by the same access. It's not going to be identical.

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: Again, I'm being clear.

If I phone 911 and I'm dealing with this incident, I want the police to come. That's the same process everywhere else and anywhere else in Canada.

Mr. Ron McKinnon: Do they not come now if you call?

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: I'm sorry?

The Chair: I'm not quite sure what's going on over here, but you and Mr. McKinnon are having a conversation, with about 30 seconds left.

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: What's your question again?

Mr. Ron McKinnon: You're saying that when you make a call, you want someone to show up. Does that not happen now?

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: Again, I'm talking about the process and what's available in Canada. It's the same thing. Again, if I phone for police help in the city of Saskatoon, I expect the police to come and see me. Again, that should be as anywhere else across Canada.

Mr. Ron McKinnon: Fair enough, but are you saying it doesn't happen in your community, that when you make the call, the police don't come?

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: Yes, I'm not going to answer that question clearly because you're misunderstanding the point that I'm trying to make.

Residents across Canada should have and must have access to law enforcement services, be it the municipal police force or the RCMP.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. McKinnon.

Ms. Jolibois, thank you for your testimony before the committee. We appreciate your effort to express yourself here.

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you.

Before I suspend and we bring in the RCMP panel, I have two items to bring to colleagues' attention.

Normally we would do this in camera, but I don't really see the point. It is adopting a budget for this particular study. It's all been distributed. I don't anticipate that we will spend nearly the amount of money that's budgeted for. Nevertheless, we do need to have a budget for this particular study.

May I have a mover of the motion?

• (1635)

Ms. Christine Moore: I don't have the budget.

[Translation]

The Chair: Here it is.

[English]

Mr. Michel Picard: I so move.

[Translation]

The Chair: It's simple.

[English]

Mr. Picard has moved the motion.

Is there any discussion?

(Motion agreed to [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: That's item number one.

Item number two has to do with a request by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress to appear before the committee. It would be November 6 and 7. I just want to inform the committee that they are going to be appearing before the defence committee during that time period. The defence committee is adding an hour onto its usual time.

Is there an appetite to have the Ukrainian Canadian Congress appear before the committee with a delegation from the Atlantic Council?

Go ahead, Mr. Paul-Hus.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: What is the purpose of the request?

[*English*]

The Chair: The objective is to discuss sanctions against Russia, defence and security support for Ukraine, NATO in the context of Russian aggression, reforms in domestic politics in Ukraine, and support for democracy in the 2019 elected cycle.

Well, one part is possibly within the mandate of this committee. The rest is really foreign affairs and defence.

Can I just simply acknowledge receipt? Members will say that they will either join the defence committee or the foreign affairs committee or make private arrangements. Is that fine?

Some hon. members: Yes.

The Chair: Thank you, colleagues, for your indulgence.

I see that we are now being joined by the RCMP. I really don't need to suspend, do I?

Okay.

We have, in the flesh, Assistant Commissioner Byron Boucher. Not in the flesh, we have Assistant Commissioner John Ferguson, and Superintendent Peter Tewfik, officer in charge of crime reduction strategy. I hope that I pronounced Officer Tewfik's name correctly.

With that, Monsieur Boucher, are you going to lead off?

Assistant Commissioner Byron Boucher (Contract and Aboriginal Policing, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): Yes, I will. Thank you.

Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and honourable members of the committee. Thank you for inviting the RCMP to speak to you today about motion 167 regarding rural crime in Canada.

In the RCMP, my particular responsibility is here in Ottawa as the assistant commissioner in charge of contract and aboriginal policing. My compatriots here are Assistant Commissioner John Ferguson in K Division, Alberta, as criminal operations officer for the province, and Peter Tewfik, officer in charge of crime reduction strategies. They'll be able to provide you with information and answers to questions as you deliberate this motion.

The RCMP is Canada's national police force, providing police services under contract to all provinces and territories, with the exceptions of Ontario and Quebec, as well as some 150 municipalities across the country. These services are provided through the police services agreements, which see the costs of the RCMP services split between the provincial or municipal governments and the federal government.

The RCMP also provides policing services to over 600 indigenous communities across Canada as well as federal policing services for all of Canada. Contract policing allows for consistent quality of police service across Canada. The level of policing services provided in each province and territory rests ultimately with the provincial and territorial governments, as do the objectives, priorities and goals for policing in each of those jurisdictions. The RCMP is the service provider.

In this context, it's important to understand that each jurisdiction can develop and pursue individual, customized local initiatives to address issues such as rural crime. Given the geographic scope of Canada, much of the territory under RCMP jurisdiction is remote or rural, and many of the communities it serves are isolated.

● (1640)

Policing in rural or isolated communities can pose a number of complexities. The RCMP is aware of concerns regarding public safety and crime rates in rural areas and works closely with the provinces and territories to address the needs of those communities.

The safety of our communities is a priority, and as such, the RCMP works together with local leaders to identify challenges and develop viable solutions to promote and uphold community safety. For example, the RCMP holds town hall meetings to engage rural community leaders and residents to discuss safety challenges and possible solutions. In addition, the RCMP continues to collaborate with communities and government stakeholders in support of youth and to address social issues leading or contributing to crime. Specifically, the RCMP implements crime prevention initiatives in an effort to reduce youth involvement in crime.

A great deal of effort has gone towards creating partnerships between the RCMP and nationwide organizations such as Crime Stoppers, as well as local organizations such as the Alberta Provincial Rural Crime Watch Association.

Further, the RCMP continues to implement programs to support regular members in their crime prevention efforts. For example, significant efforts have been undertaken to develop and implement revised auxiliary policing programs. Auxiliaries are unarmed, specially trained volunteers whose primary purpose is to participate in community policing services, crime prevention and public safety activities. At this time, the RCMP is closely working with all of its auxiliary program coordinators across the country to implement their visions of the program.

Our reserve program also allows the RCMP to hire former police officers to temporarily address member vacancies and provide mentoring to our new younger members. Reservists have the powers, duties and responsibilities of regular members when they are called up for duty. The RCMP reserve program is a desirable option to address rural crime, providing much-needed resources to the organization to support community policing priorities.

The RCMP remains committed to working with leaders in rural communities where it provides policing services, helping to identify the root causes and factors behind the increase in rural crime as well as to ensure crime prevention issues are effective and meaningful. In this context, each jurisdiction can develop and pursue individual and customized initiatives to address their distinct challenges and issues.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today. I look forward to answering your questions.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Dabrusin, you have seven minutes.

Some hon. members: No. There are other statements, Chair.

The Chair: Oh, I'm sorry. Well, I guess Ms. Dabrusin is going to have to wait.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I'll have to wait.

The Chair: I had assumed, incorrectly, that you spoke for all three.

Who's next?

Assistant Commissioner John Ferguson (Criminal Operations Officer, Core, K Division, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): Sir, it's Assistant Commissioner John Ferguson.

The Chair: Please make your statement.

Thank you.

A/Commr John Ferguson: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and honourable members of the committee.

First of all, thank you for inviting me and Superintendent Tewfik to speak to you today about motion M-167.

The RCMP in Alberta have implemented a very comprehensive crime reduction strategy as the foundational basis for the delivery of policing services to the people of Alberta.

Based on an intelligence-led policing model, the crime reduction strategy deploys a variety of initiatives designed to proactively target the small percentage of individuals who are causing our communities the most harm. This means promoting a collaborative approach with municipal, provincial and federal partners, as well as citizens, community groups, health partners and enforcement partners.

We have also established dedicated crime-reduction units, made up of experienced members at the regional and detachment levels.

We are investing heavily in intelligence gathering and analysis. This includes specialized intelligence coordinators who develop actionable snapshots of the criminal landscape to intelligence analysts embedded within our crime reduction units, who then analyze massive amounts of data and provide information that leads to arrest.

Our initiatives also include implementing new technologies that help increase analytical power and reduce the administrative burden for front-line officers. These technologies and administrative advancements provide more time for our members to dig deeper in their investigations and engage with communities they serve.

Finally, our initiatives include engaging directly with Albertans and citizen-led community groups to find ways to work together to keep neighbourhoods safe and raise awareness on what citizens can do to contribute to our communities' safety.

Midway through our first year of implementation, our data indicates our policing approach is making a difference. From January to September of this year, property crimes such as possession of stolen property, break and enters, auto theft and property thefts are down 9% compared to the same period last year. If we just look at the rural detachments in Alberta, these types of property crimes are down 11%.

Our strategy's impact becomes clearer when we look at the month of September this year and compare it to the month of September last year. This past September, these types of crimes in Alberta's rural detachments had decreased 27% compared to the same month last year.

What does this look like in real terms in Alberta communities? It means that this year, as of the end of September, 880 fewer cars have been reported stolen, 567 fewer homes have been broken into, and 2,938 fewer thefts have taken place throughout the province.

Our regional crime reduction units, a key component of our crime reduction strategy, have proven successful in targeting the individuals who hurt our communities the most. These four crime reduction units alone have made over 600 proactive arrests, representing 1,900 new charges stemming from these arrests. On average, at the time of the arrest, these individuals have three new charges brought against them. These are the small percentage of individuals who are responsible for most of the crime in Alberta. Our crime reduction units are committed to identifying and apprehending these targets.

We understand that statistics have a tendency to fluctuate. However, with support from all three levels of government, our enforcement partners, citizen-led community groups, and Albertans as a whole, we are confident that our crime reduction strategy is working and will continue to work over the long term.

Thank you very much.

• (1645)

The Chair: Superintendent Tewfik, do you as well have a statement?

Superintendent Peter Tewfik (Officer in Charge, Crime Reduction Strategies, Core, K Division, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): No, I do not.

The Chair: Okay, that's it.

We'll start with Ms. Dabrusin, then, for seven minutes, please.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Thank you.

We covered a bit of ground here. Maybe we can start with the Alberta crime strategy.

I was looking at the same reports that Mr. Eglinski was referring to in the last hour. When we look at the rate of police strength by province and territory in chart 2, we see it shows that Alberta is below the line as far as police strength is concerned, lower than the average across provinces and territories.

Then I was looking at some articles about this program that you're referring to and that we just heard about. I was curious, because it looked as though this involved a significant amount of provincial funding. It was unclear, because some of the articles referred to \$8 million and some to \$10 million. I saw a whole bunch of numbers. Could you perhaps help me understand what the provincial part was for this program that you've just referred to?

A/Commr John Ferguson: Absolutely.

It was \$10 million overall, with \$8 million coming to the RCMP and \$2 million to the Alberta Crown Prosecution Service. We have based our crime reduction strategy on the \$8 million that we were provided by the province. The extra resources that we have dedicated to that program are paid for from that \$8 million.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I saw that as part of the mandate. It looked as though it's working in partnership with agencies to help break the cycle of violence. It seemed that it's working with communities on community supports. When this committee in 2014 did a study about policing, there was a focus in many of the recommendations on those types of efforts.

Can you tell me a little bit more about that part of the mandate, about partnership with agencies to break the cycle of violence or break the cycle for crime?

Supt Peter Tewfik: I can address that.

What we're talking about in terms of breaking the cycle or addressing the root causes of crime really comes down to offender management. Offender management for habitual offenders throughout Alberta is a priority for all of our detachments to carry.

I can tell you that the RCMP partnered recently with the Edmonton Police Service and a number of social service agencies in a project out of northeast Edmonton called the integrated offender management initiative. That pilot is actually being extended to Drayton Valley, where we're going to be working on a regional management model. Again, it's designed to prioritize offenders who have a potential to get out of the offending cycle and to assist them in connecting with the social services they require or health agencies that they might require, such as for addictions, in order to break that cycle.

It's a collaborative approach with police, social agencies, and not-for-profit groups to address some of the root causes of crime. It is a program that is running throughout all of Alberta. I would say it's not working as effectively as we would like throughout the entirety of the province; however, we're working on making a more robust management structure in order to improve service delivery.

• (1650)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Thank you.

I'm going to shift gears a little bit. The focus is on a study about rural crime, and we have to look a bit at the assumptions and

numbers and what we're talking about when we talk about rural crime.

I was reading an article—and I can always provide a copy to other folks, if they want—that was interesting because there was a quote from a Corporal Rob King with the RCMP's communications unit. In it, he states that he believes that in rural areas people tend to report crime more than they do in larger cities, where police forces are so busy that they might not even have time to take the complaint.

I have to admit that even in my own situation—my bicycle was stolen from my back yard—I didn't report it to the police. I'm curious about whether, when we're talking about rates of crime, there are differences in reporting levels that have ever been measured between rural areas and city areas.

Supt Peter Tewfik: I can say that I'm not aware of any study that has been done to compare call volumes from rural areas with those in city areas.

I can tell you that I've attended a number of town halls throughout Alberta, and our messaging to Albertans has been that we're looking for their help in reporting crime. We've been encouraging people to report crime.

In fact, we've restructured some of our call management to improve our ability to respond to those people who simply have a report of crime, when perhaps there's nothing the police can do in the first instance. We've developed what we call a call-back unit that's able to take in some of that information so that we still capture the intelligence that helps guide our patrols and where we direct our officers on patrol. It ensures that we have follow-up with Albertans out in the public and that they understand that the police have taken this information.

If there is some actionable information that the police need to take action on, they'll be connected with an officer to attend.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: When we're talking about different stats on crimes, many of them come from how many are being actually reported by people. That's why I was curious. If anyone has any information that you come across that might help me as to reporting levels or anything, it would be really helpful.

In the Statistics Canada police-reported crime statistics for 2017, there were two stats, and I'm going to put both of them to you just because I'm running out of time. If you have anything that you can comment on....

The first was on page 3. The report says that "Violent, property and other crime all decreased in rural areas while they increased in urban areas."

The other statistic that came from Statistics Canada was about firearms-related violent crime. It said, "Most of the increase in the number of incidents of firearm-specific violent offences in Canada occurred outside of CMAs." I believe that refers to concentrated metropolitan areas.

Do you have anything to comment about those two stats in the most recent reports?

The Chair: Don't feel like you have to—

Supt Peter Tewfik: Are those stats for all of Canada? I just wanted to clarify.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Yes, it's Statistics Canada police-reported crime in Canada, as measured by both the crime rate and the crime severity index. It's a StatsCan report for 2017.

The Chair: I would find that a difficult question to respond to off the top. If you feel that you want to respond later in writing once you've read the material, you're welcome to. On the other hand, if you feel you have a response, you're also welcome to respond at this time.

A/Commr John Ferguson: Not having read the report, I think we'd be hesitant to speak to it at this point.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Okay.

The Chair: Okay. Could you undertake to the committee to look at the material that Ms. Dabrusin is referencing? Then the committee will entertain your response. Shall we leave it there?

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Can you refer back again to the page? I kind of missed that myself.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: It is on page 3—"Police-reported crime rates higher in rural areas than urban areas"—in that part.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: It's page 3.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I don't want to take up too much of everybody's time, but it's "Police-reported crime statistics, 2017" from Statistics Canada.

The Chair: Any clarification would be welcome.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: It was released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in The Daily, Monday, July 23, 2018.

Ms. Christine Moore: Mr. Chair, we'll be able to provide the link to the document.

The Chair: You can provide that material. Then they can comment on it. Mr. Eglinski is presumably also interested.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul-Hus, you have seven minutes.

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

Thank you for being here, gentlemen. This is an important issue for us in the Conservative Party. A number of our party members are from Alberta and are very concerned about the situation.

Mr. Boucher, you painted the bigger picture. Mr. Ferguson, you provided some figures. In particular, you mentioned that a program has been in place for one year to collect new data and that it seems to be quite effective.

The committee has three meetings to review the situation. We therefore want to have the clearest possible answers from you.

People often tend to blame the RCMP. However, I don't think you automatically deserve this blame; everyone must do their part.

Do you think it's possible to handle the situation on the ground in Alberta right now? Will the measures put in place address major problems? Clearly, there will always be problems, but will the tools you have put in place make it possible to handle the most serious situations over the next 6 to 12 months?

●(1655)

[English]

A/Commr John Ferguson: We fully acknowledge that we have some challenges ahead of us, but with respect to tackling crime, particularly in the rural areas, with the strategy that we have implemented, we feel very confident and comfortable that we are absolutely going in the right direction. We are seeing some tremendous results. Again, it comes down to having that information, that intelligence as to who's committing the crimes in our communities and then having the ability to go after them. That's what our strategy is focused on.

Will we solve all the crime? No, but again, if we can focus on those who are causing the most harm in those communities and have a dedicated team to interdict and target them, the results will speak for themselves. We feel incredibly excited about what is happening here. We have other initiatives that we hope to be bringing on as the year goes on. Again, they are targeted in nature.

These are not things that we have come up with. These are things that have been implemented in other parts of the country and in other countries in the world. We've seen the success that they've had there, and so we're trying anything we can. That is our focus. We realize that we have to have direction and focus in terms of how we react.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Ferguson, in your comments, you provided some of the success percentages you've achieved. Would you be able to send a report to the committee with an overview of the situation and the problems you are facing? Have you targeted any specific gangs or criminal groups about which the committee members could have information? We would like to have the facts about what is really happening in Alberta so that we can help you in your work.

[English]

Supt Peter Tewfik: If I may address that, we can certainly pass on some information to the committee about the trends we've identified and some of the percentages. I think specific information about the types of people involved in the crimes might not be appropriate, but we can certainly look at how we might be able to convey that information to the committee.

Would it be useful for me to outline for you some of the initiatives that we have undertaken?

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Yes, go ahead.

[English]

Supt Peter Tewfik: I will go through this in a couple of stages.

The first initiative I will talk about is our enhanced intelligence capacity. We have criminal intelligence coordinators who liaise with our enforcement partners, as well as our detachment, to develop information that we use for special operations and to guide our patrols. We distribute criminal intelligence on a dashboard to our district officers at present, and I'm working on building a capacity to share those with community partners and our other law enforcement partners in the province.

We also have criminal intelligence analysts who directly support the district crime reduction units and provide them with information that helps guide targeted patrols and the people they target as priority or prolific offenders. This obviously varies from area to area within the province.

I have another initiative, which I'll call our apprehension initiative. We've already mentioned our crime reduction teams. There, the province is broken up into four distinct areas, and each area has a unit that's dedicated to crime reduction, targeting repeat offenders in that area by using our intelligence to identify those people and arrest them. We've already made reference to their having made 632 arrests since the units were implemented as a whole and having laid over 1,900 charges.

We're also looking at targeted auto theft, where we're targeting prolific auto thieves and undertaking specialized projects to identify those people and link them to larger theft rings around auto theft.

For suppression, we have increased patrol as a result of another project we have going, which I mentioned, the call-back unit, as well as the PROS data centre. Those two projects are designed to relieve the administrative burden for a lot of the members who are currently working, so that they have more time to spend on the road rather than being in the office. As a result, they're more available for strategic patrols in the field, which helps suppress crime.

• (1700)

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: I'm sorry, but I'm going to have to interrupt you, because I don't have a lot of time to ask questions. Can you provide the committee with the document that lists the measures taken, so that we can add them to our report?

[English]

Supt Peter Tewfik: Certainly.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: How much time do I have left, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: You have one minute left.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Okay.

Does current legislation allow you to do your job properly? Should it be amended to help you do your job? Are there any problems with the legislative provisions governing the arrest and detention of people? For example, do they allow detainees to be released too quickly?

[English]

A/Commr John Ferguson: With respect to the laws, we're quite comfortable with the laws that are there. Obviously, if the elected

officials are looking at laws that they feel will enhance our abilities, absolutely.

With respect to the cycle you may be referring to in terms of our arresting people and their going before the system and getting released very quickly or not staying in, as I said, with part of the \$2 million that the province provided to Alberta Crown prosecutions they've identified a lead Crown prosecutor who works directly with Peter. When we're dealing with offences that our crime reduction teams are in particular dealing with, we're able to convey to them the importance and the seriousness of the offences so that now they're able to better articulate and argue before the courts why these people should be remanded into custody. We are seeing some very good results as a result of that.

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

Thank you, Mr. Paul-Hus.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Thank you.

[Translation]

The Chair: Ms. Moore, you have seven minutes.

Ms. Christine Moore: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The police force for Abitibi—Témiscamingue is the Sûreté du Québec. I have a number of police friends from that region. They told me that no one was rushing to apply for jobs in rural areas. When the police officers in training leave the École nationale de police du Québec in Nicolet, most of the ones from Abitibi manage to find a position in the region. Even if it is not always in the town that they want, they manage to return to their region quite easily.

As a result, our police officers may be young and less experienced, but they are familiar with the surroundings. They already know the side roads that people tend to use when they are drunk. They already know the people who are in bad company. They are sort of aware of the crime in the area where they are sent to work.

Does the RCMP have the same problem, that positions in rural, northern or remote communities tend not to be filled quickly, so that new, inexperienced officers are sent to those regions? Do the officers who are sent to rural communities tend to come from those same regions, or are they unfortunately people who are not familiar with the communities or the dynamics of those regions at all, sometimes even people who come from another province?

[English]

A/Commr Byron Boucher: I could start by responding to that. Assistant Commissioner Ferguson might want to add something from an Alberta perspective.

When we sign on with the RCMP, we agree to go anywhere. Many of our new police officers who go to these remote communities are very junior in service. They have the benefit most times of having somebody else; they're not there by themselves. They go in when there are already other police officers in place, so there's a bit of a transition that takes place.

We also have what I would call the "reserve cadre". Right now in northern Canada, in places such as Nunavut, we are sending in reserve officers. Those are officers who have retired from the RCMP, signed back on to be a reserve member, and may go and fill in, in a particular community, for anywhere up to three or four weeks, wherever we have shortages. They bring with them a lot of experience. They could have anywhere from 30 to 35 years of policing experience, and everybody benefits from that. Obviously, the ties to the communities assist greatly as well.

However, yes, you're absolutely right that in many cases we have a very young workforce. We are seeing a lot of these communities with new, younger police officers. They're also limited-duration postings because of their remoteness. We see a lot of transition out of there.

• (1705)

A/Commr John Ferguson: From the Alberta perspective, that's very true. It is a challenge for us to get members to some of our more northern and isolated spots. Some of it might have to do with a person's desire for a certain type of lifestyle, but also a big factor is that a lot of these members are married and their spouses have careers themselves. Sometimes it's just a lack of opportunities for their spouses in those communities.

We try to be creative and we try to create incentives. You will see, on average, a more junior membership in the north than you will in the south for primarily those reasons. It is a challenge for us, and we do try to manage it as best we can.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Moore: Is there any specific training for RCMP members before they are sent to northern communities to help them deal with this reality? For example, they will have a hard time getting support in some situations. They will have to manage crises that would normally require the intervention of a specialized unit, which can take several hours to come to the site, for example when individuals are in barricade situations and negotiations are required.

Do those officers receive any specific training before they are sent to the north, or do they sort of learn from experience?

[English]

A/Commr Byron Boucher: Go ahead, John.

A/Commr John Ferguson: Byron, you might like to speak from the national perspective, but it's fair to say that there's no specific training, necessarily, for serving in the north. All of our members are trained to a certain level at Depot. Then when they come to their detachment they're paired with a seasoned officer for a minimum of six months, so there's ongoing training there.

When it comes to police defensive tactics and awareness, that is an area that we focus on in Depot but continue to focus on at the division level as well, with certain annual training courses and even

some other types of training. There's no specific course that we give just to members who are going into our rural areas.

A/Commr Byron Boucher: The basic training remains the same, but there are cultural awareness courses available to members going in. Sometimes they differ among provinces, depending on the communities they might be going to police in.

When you spoke about specialized services, what comes to mind immediately for me is the availability of emergency response teams in northern Canada. In many cases...you mentioned hours, but it could be well over a day, depending on the distance and what's going on. We have what we call "containment teams" in place and negotiators specially trained to hold the situation until more advanced responders can arrive.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Moore: So there is no specific training. There is cultural training, but there is no tactical or operational training specific to northern realities.

[English]

The Chair: You have about half a minute.

A/Commr Byron Boucher: There is tactical training in the sense that some of those members may be trained to do things such as act in containment teams. Otherwise, yes, there is cultural training, but the general training for members is the same across the board.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Moore: In Alberta, you haven't put in place any training specific to northern realities, have you?

[English]

A/Commr John Ferguson: No, not as it relates to policing specifically, other than what Byron talked about. In certain areas, we will have a containment team. It will be a select number of members who will have a little bit more enhanced training, but again there's nothing specific for a member just going to the north or to a rural detachment.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Moore.

Mr. Picard, you have seven minutes.

• (1710)

[English]

Mr. Michel Picard: Thank you, especially for your service and engagement to the Canadian population.

In the past hour, I struggled a little bit trying to understand whether there was a difference between the nature of crime in the rural environment compared to the suburbs and the urban environment, because in order for us to make the right proposals, we need to understand what the problem is.

Is there something that is characteristic of what's happening in the rural environment that we might not realize in an urban environment, or is it just the same type of crime we face but with little differences, such as the fact that the territory is quite wide or that the number of people is way smaller than in the cities, while the service remains the same type of service that the RCMP is offering to the population?

Supt Peter Tewfik: I think, to address your question, there are obviously differences between rural and urban areas. Some of what we're looking at when it comes to crime prevention is crime prevention that would be tailored to be more effective in a rural area. A lot of what is discussed around crime prevention initiatives was studied in an urban environment. A lot of the evidence-based studies come out of urban environments. We've been looking at studies that include or are inclusive of rural locations when we're evaluating the effectiveness of strategies that we want to put in place.

There's been a lot of discussion in the province of Alberta regarding whether crime is moving from the urban centres into the rural areas. I don't have any evidence to support that. All we can say is that there is crime in the rural areas, and I can tell you that when we look at our statistics, we see that half of the vehicles that are stolen in Alberta have the keys in them. This is more of a reality in the rural communities, where people have their property insecure or leave their keys and so on in the car. I think that lends itself more to that kind of opportunity crime.

In terms of what the origin of the crime is, that's tough to speak to directly, but the challenges in a rural environment are different from those in an urban environment, some of which you've already mentioned.

Mr. Michel Picard: Mr. Boucher, do you have anything to add?

A/Commr Byron Boucher: The challenges for us above that would be just the distance in responding. The population is quite dispersed, and our ability to get there quickly is not the same, obviously, as it is a big city.

Mr. Michel Picard: You explained earlier that based on your report, your performance was quite good, since a reduction of crime happened in the last months or years. Are those results comparable to regions elsewhere in Canada? How do you compare your results with what is done in the city, and what works in your case? Obviously you did something good, since the results are positive.

Supt Peter Tewfik: Thank you. I can address that a little bit.

In terms of our results, the comparison we're looking at is five years of data within Alberta. That's an apples-to-apples comparison when we look at historical patterns within the province. If we started to try to compare Alberta to other provinces, I don't think that that would necessarily be an equal comparison. There might be other factors that need to be considered in terms of what's going on.

We're comparing the data that we're looking at to our historical data in the same time frame, so I feel like that makes the trends that we're seeing demonstrate that some of our strategies are working.

In addition to that, I can tell you that our clearance rate, which is our ability to identify the person responsible for a crime, is also going up. Simply put, one aspect of our strategy is focusing on the people causing the most harm to our communities. Once again, not only are we arresting those people, but on average we have three new charges that are generated with each arrest. This means we're on the right kind of offenders, because we're generating more charges from each individual arrest. I think that proves it's an effective strategy.

For me, it's about collaboration with our community partners, our citizen-led groups, as well as with law enforcement partners, that helps make this an effective strategy.

Mr. Michel Picard: With your proximity to community partners, what kinds of challenges do you face where in some cases everyone knows everyone by their first name? Sometimes it's hard to enforce something when the partner or collaborator is a brother or a cousin. When a situation has been submitted to you, it creates some issues when enforcement is at stake and you have to act upon someone. Obviously, no one knows everyone....

● (1715)

Supt Peter Tewfik: Certainly, as one of the things, I'll address one aspect of your question, which is awareness. More and more now, people living in rural environments, particularly people who are moving from urban to rural areas, don't know their neighbours. They don't know the people who surround them, even on acreages, or people in the area. It's important from a community safety perspective to have that understanding. I encourage people to join citizen-led groups like the rural crime watch groups and Citizens on Patrol in order to have that community engagement and to understand the situation where they're living.

We've also put online recently—and we have about 50% compliance so far—public crime maps. This is mapping information that people can access about their area to see what kind of crime is occurring and where it is occurring around them over about a two-week snapshot. This helps to increase vigilance and helps people to have a good understanding about what crime is occurring in their area and what challenges they face.

The Chair: You have five seconds left.

Mr. Michel Picard: No—15, 14...?

Okay.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Motz.

Mr. Glen Motz: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, gentlemen, for being here with us today.

I want to go back very quickly to the crime stats that Ms. Dabrusin reported. That same crime report suggests that Canadian rural crime rates are significantly higher in populations in comparison to urban areas. Seventeen per cent of the population of Canada lives in rural areas, yet 25% of the violent crime, 18% of the property crime and 24% of all other Criminal Code crime is committed in rural areas, as reported by rural police there. There is a significant issue, and we know that.

I have a couple of things. I've been travelling across the country speaking to law enforcement leaders, including many RCMP commanders who have suggested that the current contract policing model—and I'll use the term they used—is broken and in need of an overhaul in order for the RCMP to adequately address the current and evolving demands in rural crime.

Again, I only have five minutes in total and I have another couple of questions. Do you have any thoughts on how we might fix the current model so that we can be more responsive to the needs of the rural communities?

A/Commr Byron Boucher: I can comment on the funding model. The contracts are between the Government of Canada and each province, territory and, in some cases, municipality. That funding agreement is broken down as a seventy-thirty split, with 70% for the province and 30% for the federal government, as agreed to.

The RCMP is a service provider. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, resourcing is left to the province, territory or municipality. They decide the resource levels. Once they come to us and tell us that they want new members, that they want to grow, we have a year to produce that individual, that new member for the force.

Mr. Glen Motz: I'll go back. I know those numbers. I'm just curious to know whether there's any movement within the RCMP to consider.... I'm not talking money; I'm talking about the deployment of people. Is there any movement within the RCMP? If there isn't, maybe there needs to be an opportunity to do that.

I want to applaud the two gentlemen, Assistant Commissioner Ferguson and the crime reduction officer. I applaud the efforts that are being made in Alberta. It's a response to a growing issue. As you've said, it has been growing over the last five years or so. We know, and it's not anecdotal—I think there's clear evidence to suggest this—that many of the crimes committed in rural Canada, certainly in rural Alberta, have been due to urban criminals moving out to the country because of their thought that there will be fewer enforcement opportunities and therefore less opportunity to get caught.

I applaud the efforts. I specifically want to point out that the trial run for your crime reduction strategy that you implemented in Alberta—which is fledgling, but you need to be complimented on it—came out of the Red Deer rural detachment and some of the surrounding detachments. I want to applaud both of you for leading that charge. It is having a significant impact on the crime rates that were reported there.

I'm curious to know, in your thoughts, whether there are plans to roll that out to other jurisdictions within Alberta that you're responsible for. Are there any thoughts with your colleagues from other western provinces and eastern provinces that also have the same issue in terms of the same sort of strategy in dealing with their issues?

• (1720)

A/Commr John Ferguson: I can say yes. For me personally, I've only been in this role since January of this year. Peter has been in the other role for about four months.

I came here from Nova Scotia a few years ago. Our former commanding officer, Todd Shean, came from Ottawa, but prior to that—many years ago—was in Codiac, New Brunswick.

The strategies we're employing here are the exact same strategies that he employed when he was in Codiac and that were being employed in Nova Scotia at the time I was there. When I came to the province, I went to Grande Prairie—which in 2015, according to Maclean's magazine, had the highest crime rate in the country—and it was the same strategy.

I guess my point is that we're always collaborating with our counterparts across the country. We meet twice a year [*Technical difficulty—Editor*].

The Chair: So much for collaboration.

Mr. Glen Motz: And I was just going to ask the collaboration question.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: I guess there wasn't enough money in the budget.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Glen Motz: If we get him back, I have.... Hopefully we get them back.

The Chair: Okay, here we are. I think we're back.

Mr. Glen Motz: There you go.

I just have one more quick comment or question.

The Chair: Make it a very quick comment.

Mr. Glen Motz: You have to give me some latitude for this.

The Chair: I gave you 13 seconds.

Mr. Glen Motz: No, that doesn't work. We were down for 45.

Anyway, we said that many of the criminals are coming from urban areas into rural areas to do their crimes, and municipal agencies have been targeting serious habitual offenders through the SHOCAP program and other things like that, with the majority of those cases being prolific offenders.

Can you elaborate on your co-operation and integrated work with the municipal agencies? I know it's key in Alberta, not only with ALERT, but with others as well. With this project specifically, is it something you will target with other jurisdictions in the south and in the north?

Supt Peter Tewfik: Yes, absolutely.

With regard to the dashboards I mentioned earlier, we needed to get our data in order to create an intelligence dashboard that would give a good snapshot of both the people of interest and the crime trends in each area. We've already had the discussions with the peace officers in the province of Alberta in terms of how to distribute that, and I'm going to be meeting with our other provincial law enforcement partners to discuss that. I already have the commitment from both citizen-led groups in Alberta on a distribution mechanism for that information.

Mr. Glen Motz: As long as you're sharing that data back and forth between the municipal and the RCMP—

Supt Peter Tewfik: That's right. That's the key, yes.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Motz.

Mr. Motz, when you were much closer to being a police officer, you were much more concise.

Mr. Glen Motz: Yes, I probably was.

The Chair: Once you got to be a politician, you seem to be less concise.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: I thought it was his age.

The Chair: For the final five minutes, we have Mr. Tan. Welcome to the committee.

Mr. Geng Tan (Don Valley North, Lib.): Thank you.

Thank you, Chair.

Several years ago, there was a 50% budget cut on the RCMP's operating budget. I'm sure that this cut caused some impact on the RCMP's ability to address those challenges on crime in either urban or rural areas.

I wonder how the RCMP has dealt with this kind of shortage in the budget, especially when you are addressing the challenge of crimes in rural areas.

A/Commr Byron Boucher: I could start off on that one.

I don't know specifically about Alberta, but we're here representing contract policing, and those budgets are decided by the provinces and territories. In terms of a 50% cut, I'm not sure what you're referring to in this particular—

Mr. Geng Tan: I can mention this one. It was called the deficit reduction action plan. Within that plan, there was a 50% cut.

A/Commr Byron Boucher: That would not have affected contract policing. That maybe would have affected us corporately and at the federal level, but not in the contract itself. Those budgets are specifically controlled by the provinces and territories.

I can say that this particular government most recently has increased funding for first nations policing, and in the next two fiscal years the RCMP will be getting another 17 positions in each fiscal year for first nations policing positions in the community tripartite agreements.

• (1725)

Mr. Geng Tan: Thank you.

Let me ask quite a different question.

Often in the urban areas, when gunshots cause some victims and also put the safety of innocent citizens in jeopardy, quite often—I'm not saying 100%—there are handguns involved in these gunshots.

Based on your knowledge and/or experience, how often or how possible is it those handguns involved in these gunshots were—and I'm asking the source of the handguns—smuggled in and stored in the rural areas and eventually transported and sold in urban areas, the cities?

A/Commr Byron Boucher: I don't have any stats specific to handguns and/or long guns. Most of the violence that we deal with, because of the areas we police, involve long guns.

Mr. Geng Tan: The question I actually want to ask is this: What if there was legislation that banned handguns in the urban areas or in the big cities, and—

The Chair: I don't think we should be inviting police officers to comment on legislation, anticipated or otherwise. They are police officers. They fulfill the law as it exists, not as it might exist—or not.

Mr. Geng Tan: Okay.

I will share the rest of my time with my colleague.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Thank you very much.

In our discussions today, the point about data has come up, and I think it's important. This comes right from Statistics Canada. They've compiled a number of facts and figures relating to criminality in Canada, as is their job.

I think the crime severity index is important for the committee to take note of, Mr. Chair, and I'm glad to supply the report. The crime severity index measures the volume of crime and the relative seriousness of the crime. In this index, for example, more weight is given to a murder as compared with a bicycle theft. A lot of criminologists have said that this measure could be more useful than the actual crime rate. We can look at this and at how it impacts particular provinces that are of concern to the committee.

In Alberta, for example, over a 10-year period of 2006 to 2016, there was a 12% decrease in crime severity. In Manitoba from 2006 to 2016, there was a 27% decrease in crime severity. In Saskatchewan from 2006 to 2016, there was a 13% decrease in crime severity.

I raise this because at the outset, when Mr. Tewfik and Mr. Ferguson were making their presentations, they said that they've seen a decrease in rates of crime in particular areas. I think Alberta was mentioned specifically. I think we weigh all these factors and we get to a conclusion that yes, there is crime, but it is on the decline. If we look at it from the severity index perspective, I think some positive developments have transpired over the past 10 or 12 years.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Fragiskatos.

As I sit here and listen to the statistics going back and forth, I think there are some things that we can invite police officers to comment on and maybe some that we can't invite police officers to comment on.

First of all, before I thank you for your presentation and your service, I want to be clear among members just exactly what it is we are asking you to comment on.

Ms. Dabrusin was presenting statistics. Mr. Motz had another observation. Mr. Eglinski had some other material that he was using in the previous.... What specifically is it we are asking these very capable witnesses to comment on with regard to the material we dealt with today?

• (1730)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I believe the statistics report I was referring to was part of what the analysts provided. I can provide the date and description of it: "Police-reported crime statistics, 2017: Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in The Daily, Monday, July 23, 2018".

The Chair: Mr. Motz, were you quoting from the same area?

Mr. Glen Motz: Yes.

The Chair: Mr. Eglinski, was it something different?

Mr. Jim Eglinski: I was going on a different line. I was trying to find, from the first witness.... I couldn't understand where her logic was, and I was trying to ask her whether she thought they needed more police in rural Canada—

Mr. Glen Motz: His document is "Police resources in Canada, 2017", dated March 28, 2018.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: That's right. I referred to it earlier.

The Chair: Then Mr. Fragiskatos brought in some weighting analysis, which I think is separate again.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: I was not looking for a comment on that. With all respect, and I have much respect for the RCMP, I was just trying to put that on the record.

The Chair: Okay.

Are we clear on what we're talking about?

Go ahead, Mr. Motz.

Mr. Glen Motz: I just want to make sure the committee is clear on what Mr. Fragiskatos just tried to do—muddy the water.

The crime severity index changed in 2006. It changed severely in 2006. If you had a break and enter at your house and someone was sexually assaulted, and then someone stole your car and stole something else, the only thing that would be reported in the crime severity index would be the most serious offence. All of the other ones would not be included in the crime severity index—

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Glen Motz: —so to use the crime security index as a gauge of rural crime in Canada is inaccurate.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Well, who says it's inaccurate?

The Chair: Colleagues, I don't need to, and we don't need to engage in this conversation between Mr. Fragiskatos and Mr. Motz on this particular topic at this particular time. However, I do want to know whether we have a clear understanding that Ms. Dabrusin and Mr. Motz are quoting from the same hymn book, shall we say, and that we've asked the witnesses clear questions for their commentary on that material.

Is that clear? Are we on the same page on that?

Mr. Glen Motz: Yes.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Yes.

The Chair: Good.

Are our witnesses clear as to what the committee is asking of them?

Supt Peter Tewfik: I would like some clarification on the answer you would like back with commentary, and the direction our commentary should go.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: You're sounding very much like a politician.

Supt Peter Tewfik: I don't need the answer specifically, just the direction you're looking for from us on that question.

The Chair: Okay.

Can we arrive at that now, or shall we think about it? Then when we get together on Thursday, we will give a specific direction to the witnesses.

Are we good on that?

Go ahead, Mr. Eglinski.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: I didn't get a chance to ask my two friends questions, but I'd like to say hi to John and Peter.

Thank you for being here today.

The Chair: Okay. Don't expect a Christmas card.

Again, thank you both for your time here before the committee, and thank you for your services. In the event that any of you are in Regina next Monday, I will be pleased to say hello to you.

Thank you again.

The meeting is adjourned.

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