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Chair: The Honourable John McKay



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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.)): I call the meeting to order. We see a quorum, and we're ready to go with the ninth meeting of the public safety committee.

We have with us today Minister Blair and his officials. The good news is that there was no vote today, so we are actually starting on time. The bad news is that the minister needs to leave at 5:15. The good news is that the minister can be quite economical in his remarks.

Before I ask him to give his opening statement, I would take note that we are calling votes 1, 5 and 10. At the end of the two hours, I will seek the committee's will with respect to the disposition of these votes.

With that, I will call on Minister Blair for his remarks and for an introduction of his officials.

Minister Blair, you have seven minutes, please.

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I will try to be economical in my remarks.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to present to you today the 2020-21 main estimates and supplementary estimates (B) for the public safety portfolio. Fortunately, in order to provide explanation to the committee of these figures in greater detail and to answer the questions that members may have, I am very pleased today to be joined by Rob Stewart, deputy minister of public safety; Michelle Tessier, deputy director at the Canadian Security Intelligence Service; President John Ossowski, Canada Border Services Agency; the senior deputy commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada, Alain Tousignant; Commissioner Lucki of the RCMP; and Jennifer Oades, chair of the Parole Board of Canada.

Mr. Chair, before I get to the estimates, allow me to take a very brief moment to recognize the hard work, professionalism and dedication of the employees across the nine organizations of my portfolio. Their collective efforts, Mr. Chair, have helped protect our borders, our communities, our corrections institutions and our national security. This year in particular, amid the unprecedented COVID pandemic, they have continued to serve Canadians and, I believe, have done an exemplary job in their work to keep us safe.

The estimates before you today reflect the breadth of that work. In my allotted time today, I hope to provide a broad overview of the

estimates, highlighting some of the most substantial items for the organizations within my portfolio.

Let me begin with the 2020-21 main estimates. As members will note, the public safety portfolio as a whole is requesting a total of \$9.7 billion for this fiscal year. Overall, the portfolio's funding has remained stable over the last few years, averaging 2.6% annual growth based on available funding authorities from 2014-15 to 2019-20. Spending increases for the portfolio in this fiscal year are also expected to be in line with those in previous years.

I'll break things down by organization, Mr. Chair.

Public Safety Canada is seeking a total of \$725 million in these main estimates. You will note that there is a request for an increase in funds to protect people from unnecessary violence and to work towards holding criminals to account. This includes an additional \$25 million to take action against gun and gang violence, over \$10 million to combat human trafficking and to protect children from online sexual exploitation, and additional investments for the national cyber security strategy. Additionally, we are working towards providing additional support for the first nations policing program as well as for infrastructure projects in indigenous communities.

I will now turn to this year's main estimates for other organizations in the public safety portfolio.

CBSA is seeking a total of just over \$2.2 billion in 2020-21, a net increase of \$80 million or 3.8% over the previous year. The most substantial item affecting this change in funding levels for the CBSA is an additional \$75 million to implement and to maintain the agency's assessment and revenue management project. Once fully implemented, this project will modernize and streamline the process of importing commercial goods. The goal is to reduce the administrative burden for importers and other trade partners and to increase CBSA's efficiency and Government of Canada revenues.

The CBSA's main estimates of 2020-21 also include an increase of \$17.3 million to enhance the operational response related to the fight against gun and gang violence. Also, you will recall that by launching the Canadian travel number, we have delivered on our commitment to improve air security and offer redress to those who were falsely flagged on the no-fly list. The main estimates include \$12.3 million to implement amendments to the Secure Air Travel Act and to introduce a framework for the passenger protect program.

I will now turn to the RCMP, which is seeking total funding in the amount of \$3.5 billion in the main estimates for 2020-21. In terms of increases, additional funds relate to contract policing services; support for the renewal of the RCMP's radio communications system infrastructure in Ontario, Quebec and the national capital region; and over \$20 million in funding to strengthen federal cybercrime enforcement.

The Correctional Service of Canada is requesting a total of \$2.6 billion in the main estimates for 2020-21. The most substantial investment is an additional \$49.7 million to support the transformation of the federal corrections system following the passage into law of Bill C-83.

• (1535)

As members know, we have eliminated administrative segregation. The new system, called structured intervention units, is designed to provide inmates the opportunity for more time out of their cells and for meaningful human contact, as well as targeted interventions and programs. They also must receive daily health care visits by a registered health professional and comprehensive mental health assessments. As we have recently been informed, there is much more work to do, though progress is being made. We'll continue to work with groups to ensure adequate reporting and oversight and to measure the progress being made in achieving these important goals.

On that note, Mr. Chair, I will now turn to the portfolio's supplementary estimates, which so far this year total \$523.3 million. This represents a small percentage, only 5.4% of the \$9.7-billion base funding requested in the main estimates.

On a portfolio-wide basis, the total authority sought in the supplementary estimates (B) more specifically would result in a net increase of \$203.2 million. This represents a 1.9% increase over the total authorities provided to date, for a total of \$10.7 billion.

If I may, I'll highlight a few key items in these estimates across the portfolio.

Most notably, CSC is seeking \$143.3 million in additional funding for support for the Correctional Service of Canada. The supplementary estimates also include a transfer of \$58.8 million from Public Safety Canada to the RCMP, and this is for first nations community policing. This transfer covers the cost of the policing services provided by the RCMP under tripartite agreements among Public Safety Canada, the provinces and territories, and first nations.

The RCMP is also seeking \$14.5 million in these estimates to implement and maintain the national cybercrime solution. This will

provide the national cybercrime coordination unit with the IM/IT functions it needs to receive, store, analyze and share cybercrime data and establish a public reporting website.

The CBSA is seeking an additional \$6 million for measures to enhance the integrity of Canada's borders and asylum system, and is also seeking funds to crack down on fraudulent consultants. More specifically, funding will support an IT system and changes to ensure that CBSA's case management systems reflect the recent changes to Canada's immigration laws.

Finally, Mr. Chair, I'll note that your documents also outline the 2020-21 main estimates and supplementary estimates (B) for CSIS, the Parole Board of Canada, the Office of the Correctional Investigator, the RCMP External Review Committee, and the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP. Additional funds for the Parole Board of Canada, in particular, will work towards addressing workload capacity for those involved with decisions pertaining to conditional release to ensure we are keeping our communities safe.

This has been a difficult year for Canadians, but regardless of the area in which they work, our employees have risen to the challenge. They work hard to keep us safe and secure.

Mr. Chair, I welcome the opportunity for me and my officials to answer any questions the committee may have.

Thank you, sir.

• (1540)

The Chair: Thank you, Minister Blair. Thank you for your cooperation in our always constrained time with you.

With that, I'll call on Ms. Stubbs for six minutes, please.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Thank you, Chair, and thanks to the minister and officials for being here.

The estimates, as you mentioned, show a 25% funding increase for CSIS, and a 2020-21 departmental plan notes many priorities, but I don't see anything on foreign interference.

To the CSIS director, last week your spokesperson said that China's Communist Party uses spies to intimidate and threaten Chinese Canadians on Canadian soil and that these illegal activities threaten Canada's sovereignty and the safety of Canadians. The foreign affairs minister said that the public safety minister would be bringing additional measures forward. What are those measures?

The Chair: Are you directing that to the minister or to the CSIS director?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: It's to the CSIS director as a first try, since we asked the minister this question in the House last week.

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

I would highlight that CSIS is mandated by its authorities as defined in the CSIS Act. The threats that CSIS can investigate are well defined in the act, primarily in terms of foreign-influenced activities and espionage. Foreign-influenced activities are defined as having to be deceptive, clandestine or a threat to Canada's national interests. In that vein, I can assure the committee that foreign interference and espionage remain very much a primary threat and a priority investigation for CSIS.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thank you.

Can you let Canadians know if any individuals in Canada have come forward to the authorities you've outlined about intimidation or harassment since those reports were published last week?

Ms. Michelle Tessier: Unfortunately, as I'm sure you appreciate, I can't get into any specific operational details. What I will say is that we work very closely with communities in Canada and with our law enforcement partners to investigate any harassment or threats to these communities. It is important for us to ensure that Canadians feel safe and that they don't feel that they or that their families are being threatened. In that vein, it is important for us to maintain those contacts and work with our law enforcement partners and any other stakeholders to investigate any threats to Canadians.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thank you.

I trust that you likely coordinate with the FBI. Of course, there were reports last week that a month ago, the U.S. charged eight individuals for these exact activities. Do you know, or can you let us know, whether any of those eight had any activities in Canada? How many foreign agents have been charged in Canada, or are any charges pending?

Ms. Michelle Tessier: I unfortunately can't get into those operational details in terms of the FBI arrests. Neither can I discuss individual investigations. Talking about any charges would be better responded to by my law enforcement colleague.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: To the minister, then, I'll just follow up one more time on the question we asked in question period, which he didn't answer specifically.

Minister, can you tell us exactly what measures you will be implementing to confront and combat the issues of foreign intimidation and harassment in Canada?

Hon. Bill Blair: Thank you very much for the important question.

Ms. Stubbs, you'll recall that when I last appeared before the SECU committee, I actually raised the issue of the hostile activities of state actors and spoke very specifically about this issue with respect to the Chinese government in particular.

Although I'm sure you appreciate that it's entirely inappropriate to talk about any matter of ongoing investigation or to speak of elements of national security, I can tell you—

• (1545)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Sir, the foreign affairs minister said you would bring in additional measures to combat what clearly we now know really is happening in Canada, as I think probably most Canadians are shocked to learn.

What I'm trying to do is get a specific answer from you. What are those additional measures that you will bring in?

Hon. Bill Blair: Let me just give an example—

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Maybe what the foreign affairs minister was saying wasn't accurate. Maybe you aren't bringing in additional measures. However, I'd like to give you the option to answer.

Hon. Bill Blair: The foreign affairs minister and I work together very closely. I'll attempt to answer your question.

Ms. Stubbs, you've asked a number of question previously, for example, about Operation Fox Hunt, which actually began in 2014. Quite frankly, when we came into government, the operational posture and response in 2014 was determined to be quite inadequate.

As a consequence, we have very significantly changed the approach of our law enforcement officials and CSIS by taking a far more proactive approach. We do a great deal of outreach to individuals who are affected. There are things that are being done and will continue to be done. We're continuing to enhance our response.

However, with great respect, in my opinion it is not appropriate to discuss in this forum those matters of national security, intelligence gathering or law enforcement.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Minister, I would suggest that it is more than appropriate for you to tell Canadians exactly what you are going to implement to protect their safety and sovereignty, which, thank goodness, most Canadians are learning about now.

On another note, CSIS reports that Alireza Onghaei runs a company that has been "assisting the government of Iran in the clandestine wiring of monies into Canada."

Do you or anyone in your department or the agencies under your portfolio know of any politically exposed persons who might be involved with Onghaei?

Hon. Bill Blair: As you note, our officials have done a very exemplary job in identifying and gathering the evidence in order to deal effectively with this threat. I'm unable to discuss particular elements of that intelligence or that investigation in this forum.

We always take steps to make sure that if there are vulnerabilities identified, they're dealt with appropriately.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Stubbs.

Mr. Iacono, you have six minutes.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thank you, Chair.

[Translation]

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Thank you for being with us and for your presentation, Minister.

We are all aware of the exceptional working conditions faced by the people from the organizations represented here today, who are responsible for our safety. I would like to express our thanks and support to them.

With respect to spending for 2020-2021, I'd like to discuss with you the phenomenon of recurring floods. It's a major concern, for Quebecers specifically, especially people in the Montreal area and, most particularly, for residents in my area, in Laval.

Could you tell us what steps the government is taking to anticipate and respond to the problems associated with this natural phenomenon? Floods have done a lot of damage in the past, and they could get worse in the future because of global warming.

[English]

Hon. Bill Blair: Thank you very much. I agree that this is a very important question.

Floods and the recovery from those floods have significantly impacted Canadians rights across the country and, as we both know, in the province of Quebec. That's why the Prime Minister mandated me in my portfolio to take action to create a more resilient and sustainable approach to floods in Canada. A very important and key component of this approach involves the creation of an interdisciplinary task force on flood insurance and relocation, as we announced earlier last week.

The task force will be given the job of looking at options to protect homeowners who are at high risk of flooding and who do not have adequate insurance protection and to examine the viability of low-cost national flood insurance programs. The task force is made up of representatives of the federal government, the provinces and territories and first nations. We've also gone into the private sector; for example, the insurance industry is represented at that discussion.

We will be sharing information and working closely together to engage various departments, including first nations off reserve, in providing a more effective response. I've also worked with the infrastructure minister with respect to providing funding to various jurisdictions for flood mitigation and flood prevention initiatives. It's a very comprehensive approach.

Angelo, we believe that the work of this task force in providing greater resiliency and protection for the victims of floods as well as

a national insurance plan is going to be key to helping us provide a much more effective response.

I won't take the time to speak about this, but you know as well that the government, through the DFAA program, provides funding through the provinces to assist with flood response. We believe that a dollar invested in prevention is a far more effective dollar than one simply invested in recovery. We'll always be there for people who are victimized by floods, but we are doing some very important work to mitigate those problems before they happen.

● (1550)

[Translation]

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Thank you, Minister. Your answer is very reassuring.

Another major issue we have in my constituency, Alfred-Pellan, is about the detention conditions in prisons and the working conditions for the staff there. These individuals have been hit hard by COVID-19.

Could you provide us with more details on the response in the first wave and the costs of implementing preventive measures prior to the second wave that we are currently experiencing?

[English]

Hon. Bill Blair: Thank you very much. This is a very important question.

There are nearly 14,000 people serving sentences in our corrections institutions, and we have a duty of care to protect them during the unique challenges that occur in our correctional institutions as a result of COVID.

During the first wave, the Correctional Service of Canada did an extraordinary job, working with the Public Health Agency of Canada, provincial health authorities and regional health authorities, in making sure that their institutions were safe.

When infections were brought from the community into the institution, I believe they took some really extraordinary steps. There have been health and safety audits and infection control audits. They provided PPE to inmates and to corrections workers in the institutions. There have been a number of very effective measures. As a consequence, after the first wave they were able to wrestle that pandemic in the institutions well under control.

We were very fortunate to go a number of months, but unfortunately, with the recent surge within the community, we're starting to see that surge reflected. In your riding in particular, in the Drummond Institution, we now have 18 inmates suffering from infection, and a number of corrections officers, who of course live in the community. We are also monitoring very carefully the federal training institution, with which you are very familiar.

As of today, there are 95 inmates in the federal population right across the country who are infected with COVID. They are receiving treatment within the institutions, and we are taking very significant steps on that.

If there is more time, I would invite the deputy director of the Correctional Service of Canada to talk about some of their measures. I think the model that the Correctional Service of Canada implemented is a model that would serve well, to all of the provincial governments and other jurisdictions to show how effective safety measures can be implemented to keep inmates safe.

[Translation]

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: You have about 30 seconds, Mr. Iacono.

[Translation]

Mr. Angelo Iacono : Thank you, Minister. That's very reassuring.

I'm glad to know that we will be better prepared in this case, and that it will be before rather than after the fact.

Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Iacono.

[Translation]

Mr. Simard, I welcome you to the committee.

You have six minutes.

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to discuss border services with the minister.

I don't know if the minister remembers, but during the first wave, we had a lot of issues with snowbirds. These are seniors escaping from the cold Quebec winters by driving their recreational vehicles to the United States. They were told to come home, and it was done in a somewhat disorderly fashion. Some municipalities have had a lot of trouble finding places for these individuals.

However, we're now seeing people successfully circumventing non-essential travel rules by having their RVs trucked across the border and flying on their own to their destination. I don't know if the minister is aware of this problem.

Have steps been taken to educate these individuals about the dangers of non-essential travel to the United States but, more importantly, to document cases of individuals using such strategies?

• (1555)

[English]

Hon. Bill Blair: Thank you very much, Mr. Simard, for a very important and very timely question, because exactly as you have explained, last spring, when COVID first became prevalent in North America, there were quite a number of Canadians, particularly Canadians from Quebec, who were down on spring break in the United States and in other places in the world. They had, under the Constitution, a right of return. We will always let Canadians return. Unfortunately, that did create a vulnerability.

The current situation is that, first of all, Global Affairs Canada is strongly advising all Canadians not to travel out of the country, to remain in Canada, but of course we don't have the authority to prevent people from making the choice to go to other jurisdictions. The rules that you talk about being circumvented are not actually Canada's rules; they are the United States' rules. The United States, although they closed the land border reciprocally with us last March as a result of discussions and arrangements that we made to restrict non-essential travel, did not put in place restrictions to prevent people from flying into their country similar to those Canada put in place.

In Canada, the rules are quite strict that non-essential travel is restricted in both land and air modes. In the United States, the Americans have allowed people to continue to fly into the U.S. As a consequence, some Canadians are in fact making the decision to fly into the U.S. to vacation or to spend their winter in Florida, in Arizona or in other places. They are not breaking any of our laws, but let me assure you that upon their return to Canada, first of all, under the Constitution, they will have a right to re-enter Canada, but they will be ordered into quarantine by whatever rules may exist at the time of their return. Right now, that's a 14-day quarantine. They will be ordered and required to quarantine upon their return.

CBSA has to allow Canadians to re-enter Canada, but they will be subject to the Public Health Agency of Canada's rules under the Quarantine Act and will be subject to quarantine. We will continue to discourage it, because, frankly, any Canadian travelling to another jurisdiction.... I would strongly urge them not to do that, but should they choose to do that, they should make sure they have good health insurance and make sure that they will have access to adequate health care.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard: Thank you, Minister.

You stated earlier that the CBSA is asking for an additional \$6 million in funding and that some of this money will be used to address the issue of fraudulent consultants. In our constituency offices, we frequently have constituents tell us that they have been approached by individuals who look a bit suspicious. The same names come up again and again.

Does the Canada Border Services Agency maintain a registry of fraudulent consultants? What specifically will the additional funds requested be used for?

[English]

Hon. Bill Blair: Again, Mr. Simard, that's a very important and relevant question. I would invite President Ossowski to provide you with some insights on the work that CBSA is doing and how the funding we are providing to them will be utilized.

Mr. John Ossowski (President, Canada Border Services Agency): Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the question.

I'm happy to report that we will be receiving \$10 million over the next five years and an additional \$2.1 million ongoing to increase our criminal investigation capacity. We currently have about 50 consultant-related investigations opening each year. This new funding will allow us to do an additional 13 or so cases a year.

I would say that the cases vary broadly in terms of the levels of complexity and effort required to bring them to some resolution. Some can take years. I can say that of the 376 cases we have open right now, 288 are still at the investigative stages and 88 are at a point where charges have been laid and the matter is before the courts.

We appreciate these resources. It's an important issue for us to ensure the integrity of our immigration system.

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Simard, you have 30 seconds left.

Mr. Mario Simard: Really? I still have a little time left?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Mario Simard: Thank you.

I'd like to know if we have guidelines establishing what a fraudulent consultant is. We sometimes see people seeking support for their application process to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, and having to pay huge amounts of money. What defines a fraudulent consultant? Do we have guidelines for how much a person can be charged, which would help detect fraudulent consultations?

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Simard has again asked an important question. He does have a second round, so possibly he could get that answer in the second round. The six minutes are up.

• (1600)

[Translation]

Thank you.

[English]

Mr. Harris, you have six minutes, please.

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

Welcome, Minister Blair, to our committee for the main estimates.

As you know, our committee is undertaking a study of systematic racism in policing in Canada, and we have a lot of evidence before us.

I want to draw your attention to the report of retired Supreme Court justice Bastarache last week, entitled “Broken Dreams —

Broken Lives”. It's a very appalling account of what he referred to as a “toxic culture” within the RCMP that encourages or at least tolerates misogynistic, homophobic and racist attitudes. He went so far as to say that he didn't believe that the RCMP could change the culture from the inside. In fact, he said, “true change can only take hold...if independent external pressure is brought to bear.”

He also said “...fixing the RCMP and addressing the negative culture that has taken root will take an immense effort and require the good will of its leaders and members. Most of these individuals are invested in the status quo and will not likely want to make the necessary changes to eradicate this toxic culture.”

That's quite an indictment, I would suggest, Minister. What I would like you to tell us is whether you are committed to eradicating this so-called toxic culture. Are you prepared to provide the external pressure that is required, according to Justice Bastarache, to see that it happens?

Hon. Bill Blair: Jack, let me begin by giving you the shortest possible answer, and the answer is yes. I am absolutely committed to that. I will tell you that the report, which I have read in its entirety, documented the devastating effects that sexual harassment and sexual violence has had on women in the RCMP. Like all Canadians—and, I believe, like the mass majority of RCMP officers—we are appalled by the lived experience of the women whose concerns were documented in this report, and they are completely unacceptable to us.

Justice Bastarache, I think, very helpfully has provided us with a number of very important recommendations. I'll give the RCMP commissioner an opportunity to speak to the very important work she's doing in response to that.

Jack, if I may answer your last question, you'll recall that in the throne speech, which you very kindly supported when it was voted on, we very clearly stated our commitment to bringing about reform of the RCMP and in particular to dealing with issues of governance, oversight and accountability. The government is prepared and is working towards fulfilling that responsibility, and so the work should be done both internally by the RCMP and externally by the government.

Mr. Jack Harris: Let me get to the accountability aspect. The Civilian Review and Complaints Commission of the RCMP chairperson was before this committee in July, when she said that the commission needs to be better resourced in order to conduct systemic reviews, yet we see a decrease in the funding for the CCRC in the main estimates and we have had outstanding complaints for three years or more that have not been dealt with and 175 reports have been sitting on the commissioner's desk since March.

What is that in terms of accountability if we don't have the additional resources that are necessary? Is the minister prepared to agree that the system is not working and needs to be fixed and better resourced?

Hon. Bill Blair: Thank you very much. That's another very important question, Jack.

Let me simply remind you that earlier this year, we introduced Bill C-3, which actually had attached to it \$24 million in additional resources for the CRCC and introduced legislation as well. That legislation also requires, in my opinion, very clear and mandatory timelines for speedy resolution. I am absolutely committed to ensuring that the important function of oversight and accountability for the RCMP, and as well for the CBSA, needs to be strong in legislation and properly funded to ensure that the independent reviewers we task with this important work have the resources, the tools and the authorities they need to do the important job. I think public trust is absolutely contingent upon both that legislation and those investments. We'll be reintroducing strong legislation in that regard.

I can also inform you that I know that the CRCC chair and the RCMP commissioner have been working together to significantly improve those timelines and to address the backlogs that existed. I'm prepared as well, in the interim, until we get this legislation passed, to take additional measures as required to ensure that those timelines are in fact met and that the resources are available to the CRCC to do their important work.

● (1605)

Mr. Jack Harris: These are the main estimates, though, Minister Blair, and there's no additional money to allow the CRCC to actually do the job the commission is asked to do. It's all very well to have high-minded words on what we're going to do, but these are the estimates that the commission has to work with. They're not able to do their job and do these systemic reviews that are required or meet those timelines. I think that's the reality that I'm calling out here today.

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

The Chair: You're down to 10 seconds.

Mr. Jack Harris: I don't think I'll have time for a preamble, let alone a question.

The Chair: Well, I know that's just not even throat-clearing time for you, Mr. Harris.

Mr. Jack Harris: Thank you, Chair. I'll have another round, I'm sure.

The Chair: You will indeed.

That does bring us to the end our first round.

Our second round is five minutes each, except for the NDP and the Bloc. We will have Mr. Motz, Mr. Khera, Mr. Simard, Mr. Harris, Mr. Van Popta and Madam Damoff.

Mr. Motz, you have five minutes.

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

Thank you, Minister Blair and officials, for being here today.

Minister, on May 1 of this year, you and your government, through an order in council, brought in a gun ban. Close to 2,000 previously legal firearms are now prohibited. Upon examining the estimates, I'm having trouble finding the cost associated with this

particular buyback program. Can you tell us the total cost of the buyback program?

Hon. Bill Blair: Thank you for your important question. As we indicated, we will be reintroducing legislation that does a number of things, including providing us with a legislative framework for firearms—

Mr. Glen Motz: Minister, you've explained exactly what this is supposed to do, which we know is a failure. I'm asking specifically for numbers. Do you have the numbers on the total cost for Canadians of this buyback program?

Hon. Bill Blair: Thank you, Glen. That actually will be provided when we bring forward the legislation that is required to facilitate how we deal with those firearms that have been prohibited.

By the way, Glen, you characterized it as a failure. I couldn't disagree with you more. That's—

Mr. Glen Motz: Okay. You're not answering my question. I'm sorry, Minister. I'm talking about costs. You're not answering my question on costs. I'll move on to my next question.

If you're going to put a budget together, obviously you're going to have some idea of what these things are. Can you provide us with an estimate of what the administration costs for the RCMP and your public safety department will be to run this program? Do you have any idea whatsoever?

Hon. Bill Blair: Thank you very much, Glen. Actually, I have some really good ideas on that. It isn't my intention to have law enforcement administer that program. That would be a very expensive and, in my opinion, a very inefficient way to do it.

We're looking at other measures so that we might very responsibly fulfill our responsibilities to those firearm owners who legally acquired these weapons that have now been made prohibited, but to do it in a cost-effective and efficient way to produce real public value—

Mr. Glen Motz: I'm sorry, Minister. We know the other plans that you have already put out. You put out not one but two tenders, both of which have come back with zero bids to date. You want somebody else to design your confiscation program for you. It doesn't appear anybody wants to touch this particular billion-dollar boondoggle.

How much do you estimate it will cost of taxpayer dollars to now pay back the legal owners of firearms that you're going to confiscate?

The Chair: Colleagues, I just want to point out that it works a lot better when we don't interrupt each other.

Minister Blair, would you respond to Mr. Motz's question?

Mr. Glen Motz: I'm just looking for numbers, Chair.

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

First of all, I think it is incumbent upon me to identify that almost everything Mr. Motz said was filled with many inaccuracies. I didn't want to interrupt him, because that would be rude, but I would not adopt any of the characterizations he presented.

However, I will advise him that with regard to the weapons that are now prohibited that were legally acquired by Canadians, I want to make sure those Canadians are treated fairly, so we are looking at bringing forward legislation and a budget to deal fairly with those Canadians. At the same time—

Mr. Glen Motz: Thank you, Minister. I appreciate those comments and I know legislation is coming forward. I've heard you. It's obvious that you don't know what the cost will be. You told Canadians that it's going to be \$250 million when you first pushed this on the Canadian public, and now we know it'll probably be ten times more than that.

I'm also curious to know how much you estimate it'll cost to buy back the guns from criminals lined up to turn in their illegal firearms, but when I look, that must be the budget line I see with all the zeros on it, because we know that none of those criminals who are the real threat to public safety are going to be lining up to turn in any of their illegally obtained firearms. A gun ban, as you know, will not apply to criminals.

• (1610)

Minister, you maintained in a statement that the AR-15 is a firearm designed to kill as many people as possible in the shortest amount of time, that it is not a hunting or sporting rifle and that it has no place in society. If that's the case, can you explain why public servants and the Government of Yukon are buying this same firearm to manage human/wildlife conflict? To me, it sounds like a legitimate use of a firearm that has appropriate licensing, safety and storage requirements, contrary to the flawed rationale you guys use to justify your order in council. Do you have any thoughts on that?

The Chair: You have less than 30 seconds to answer Mr. Motz's question.

Hon. Bill Blair: Hopefully it'll be uninterrupted.

Mr. Chair, we have prohibited weapons that have been used far too often in mass murders of innocent people and police officers. We believe there's absolutely no place for such firearms in civil society. However, I recall vividly that after three RCMP officers were murdered in Moncton by an individual using a firearm that we've now prohibited, the response of the government of the day was to buy similar firearms for the police so they would balance the fire-fight.

I believe, Mr. Chair, that we have taken action to remove those firearms from civil society. This will keep our communities and our police officers safer.

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

Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Mr. Motz.

Madam Damoff, you have five minutes, please.

Ms. Kamal Khera (Brampton West, Lib.): I thought it was me.

The Chair: I just got a note saying that you and Pam had switched.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): I think Gary switched with me and so, Kamal, go ahead.

The Chair: You have five minutes.

Ms. Kamal Khera: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Minister and all our witnesses, for being here.

Minister, last week Peel Regional Police joined forces with services across the greater Toronto area, successfully completing Project Siphon in a 14-month-long investigation resulting in numerous arrests and seizures of firearms, drugs and property. I believe over 1,800 charges were laid and 88 people arrested. I think many of the arrests were related to organized crime, firearms offences, shootings, and drug and human trafficking. I commend the Peel Regional Police for their outstanding work.

Minister, you know that in the greater Toronto area and in Brampton, unfortunately, we've heard and seen the tragic effects of gun violence too often. We know there is no simple solution. We need a comprehensive approach, including a combination of measures, such as investing in our youth and investing in our borders.

Through the main estimates and supplementaries, Minister, you're seeking an appropriation of \$85 million. Do you have any update on programs to combat gun violence and smuggling in Canada, and how we're helping municipalities like Brampton dismantle street gangs and keep our communities safe?

Hon. Bill Blair: Thank you very much, Kamal. I think this is the question of our time with gun violence in Brampton and in the city of Toronto.

First I'll take the opportunity to remind the committee that this government actually provided \$327 million over five years to the provinces and territories to fund municipal police services across Canada. We provided \$65 million to the Province of Ontario to fund police services such as the Peel Regional Police service in its guns and gangs investigations. Those monies clearly are being well spent and well invested by the Peel Regional Police service, and I join you in commending them for their dedication and their hard work and the success of their investigation.

However, we also know that just investing in law enforcement isn't enough. We've worked with the police community, and we are strengthening gun control laws to create new offences and new penalties to eliminate the ways in which criminals get guns. Many of them are smuggled across the border; some are stolen and others are criminally diverted. We'll be bringing forward legislation that will strongly deter all of those activities.

Most important, and as you highlighted in the second part of your question, we have to make investments in kids and in communities to change the social conditions that give rise to so many of these crimes of violence and create a demand for guns. I think the police are doing some extraordinary work, as is CBSA, to reduce the supply of guns, and we're going to help them do even better.

We also know we have to reduce the demand for guns in those communities, and that's why we have promised that we'll be bringing forward, in the very near future, initiatives to provide additional funding directly to communities through the municipalities for community organizations that work with kids to get them involved in after-school programs and job training programs, changing the social conditions in our communities that give rise to that violence. We believe it's important to invest in policing but also to invest in community. I believe that in the long term, it's those investments in our kids and in our communities that will have the greatest impact on public safety. They are worthy investments and investments that we are prepared to make.

• (1615)

Ms. Kamal Khera: Thank you.

Minister, just briefly, because I may not have that much time, could you talk about the security infrastructure program? In the past, we've been told that the security infrastructure program had been oversubscribed. Can you please update us on what the government has done to improve this program and make it more accessible for communities like mine in Brampton to apply to?

Hon. Bill Blair: Yes, ma'am. I think one of the most important programs and resources we make available to religious organizations and other community organizations is the funding to take steps to keep themselves more secure.

Our government has quadrupled the funding. We've increased the funding 400% over the past two years to support those organizations, but let me tell you, Kamal, it is still oversubscribed.

What we're also doing is broadening the flexibility for applying to that program and in how those resources are spent by community organizations that draw on this funding.

Through your advocacy and that of others, we will continue to work if more resources are needed. I think we get incredibly good value for those investments in supporting organizations to keep themselves safe. There are a number of ways in which we can do that, and we're making sure they have the flexibility to utilize those resources to the best effect. I think it's an extraordinarily important program. We have very substantially increased the funding, but I believe there's more that we can and must do.

Ms. Kamal Khera: Thank you.

The Chair: You have a little less than 30 seconds.

Ms. Kamal Khera: I probably won't get an answer in that time. Maybe I'll use that in the next round.

The Chair: You could also allocate it to somebody else.

Thank you.

Ms. Kamal Khera: Gary, do you want it?

The Chair: It's all right.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simard, you have two and a half minutes.

Mr. Mario Simard: I'd like to quickly come back to fraudulent consultants.

Earlier, I asked you if it was possible to establish guidelines in terms of fees and services provided. We sometimes see certain consultants charging very high fees and providing unnecessary services, which can be quite costly for people applying for family reunification or a basic student visa.

Do you keep a record of these fees and services?

[*English*]

Hon. Bill Blair: First, Mr. Simard, if I may begin, I will advise you that the criminal act of committing fraud is not tied to a specific amount but rather to the criminal intent and actions of the perpetrator of the crime. I'll invite President Ossowski to provide you with more insight into their investigations.

The Chair: Excuse me, Minister Blair, Mr. Simard, we're getting a crossover on the translation here. Let's carry on with Mr. Ossowski.

Mr. Ossowski, if you could respond, we'll see whether we're still getting the same thing we were getting with Minister Blair.

Mr. John Ossowski: The regulation of the industry would fall under the responsibility of the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. We're responsible for the criminal investigation side of things. We would typically look at offences such as misrepresentation, forgery under the Criminal Code, fraud, mischief and that type of thing. That's the type of work we're responsible for.

In terms of the Minister of Immigration, I believe it's in his mandate letter to look at bringing forward legislation to regulate the industry.

The Chair: You have a few seconds left, Mr. Simard.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard: I fully understand that it's the Department of Citizenship and Immigration's responsibility.

So they establish the guidelines in terms of what can be considered fraud.

That is what I understand.

• (1620)

[*English*]

Mr. John Ossowski: That would be defined in the courts under the Criminal Code in terms of fraud and what evidence is in play in any particular situation.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Simard.

[*English*]

Mr. Harris, you have two and a half minutes.

Mr. Jack Harris: Thank you, Chair.

I think everybody understands that there is over-representation in our prisons of indigenous and Black Canadians. A recent report published in the *Globe and Mail* revealed that in addition to that, biased and discriminatory risk assessments are being done, amounting essentially to systemic discrimination towards indigenous and Black Canadians and resulting in more ending up in maximum security, having less access to programs and training and serving a longer period of their sentence incarcerated rather than in the community.

Minister Blair, does that disturb you? Can you tell the committee what is going to be done to end this form of systemic discrimination in our prisons?

Hon. Bill Blair: Thank you very much, Jack.

Of course it's concerning. I think it's unacceptable that Black, indigenous, and all racialized people face very significant disparate outcomes within the criminal justice system writ large. It's one of the reasons we have identified our commitment to address systemic racism broadly in the criminal justice system. I've had a number of conversations with CSC and I'll allow them to speak further about some of the work they're doing, but let me also take the opportunity to commend the important work being done by this committee to identify areas of concern in risk assessment.

As we have also indicated, we will be introducing legislation and making investments to take strong action to address systemic inequities in all phases of the criminal justice system, from diversion to sentencing, from rehabilitation to records. Those CSC risk assessments to determine what institution an individual will serve their sentence in will be part of that examination.

Mr. Jack Harris: Mr. Blair, when the correctional investigator appeared before the committee earlier this month, he told us that the CSC has the highest staff-to-inmate ratio in the world, with 19,000 employees for just 12,500 inmates. That's one and a half staff for every inmate. He also told us that the inmates don't have access to much more than pencil and paper when dealing with pro-

gramming. They don't have access to tablets or computers or supervised use of the Internet, and they don't have practical tools and vocational training.

Why is it that the department in this departmental plan is actually increasing by 353 their full-time staffing equivalents instead of re-allocating resources to provide the kind of programming that's necessary to help prisoners be rehabilitated and be able to live better lives in the community?

The Chair: That's a very important question, but Mr. Harris is way past his time. I'm going to ask you to try to work in an answer in some other opportunity.

With that, Mr. Van Popta, you have five minutes.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Minister, for joining us again, and thank you to all the other witnesses.

The Chair: Is Mr. Van Popta's voice as faint to others as it is to me?

Ms. Pam Damoff: We can't hear him, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Tako Van Popta: I'll try it again. I'll speak a little louder. How is that?

• (1625)

The Chair: There we are. Excellent.

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Thank you, witnesses, for being here.

Minister, I want to talk about funding and human resources allocations for fighting illegal drugs. You're aware there's a fentanyl crisis in Canada right now, particularly in my home province of British Columbia. That fentanyl is coming from China.

Police experts have been quoted as saying they simply do not have the human resources to tackle this, nor do they have the aggressive policing strategies needed to tackle this problem of complicated transnational organized crime. Minister, my question to you is whether adequate resources are being allocated to this very serious problem for all of Canada.

Hon. Bill Blair: Thank you very much.

Let me first acknowledge the significance and criticality of dealing effectively with the interdiction of the supply of illicit drugs coming into Canada. To that end, we have invested \$33 million to help equip our border agents with the tools to intercept fentanyl and other dangerous substances. We have prohibited the unregistered importation of pill presses, for example. We have allowed officers, on reasonable grounds, to open international mail weighing 30 grams or less.

We've also made fairly significant investments in the RCMP. I would invite the RCMP commissioner to talk to you about some of their work in the international interdiction of transnational importation of illicit drugs and precursor chemicals used in their manufacture. I wonder if the commissioner might have something to add.

The Chair: Ms. Lucki—

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Sure. I have a couple of other questions, but please go ahead.

Commissioner Brenda Lucki (Commissioner, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): Obviously we've been working hard at tackling organized crime. It's a priority of ours. Those investigations are extremely complex, but they are a priority.

We work side by side with our partners, such as CSIS and CBSA and our international partners, especially within the Five Eyes, to target those groups. We work overseas with our many liaison officers to exchange that information. Those individuals are working in Canada and working overseas and dealing with transnational organized crime. That's when we bring in specialized resources to tackle those crimes.

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Thank you.

So far it has not been very effective. Over 100 people a month die of opioid overdoses in British Columbia. That's way more people than those who are dying of COVID-19, so we have two epidemics happening here. It's just been getting worse over the last four years.

Hon. Bill Blair: It's a very important question you raise. Supply interdiction of these illicit drugs is an important part of the work of our law enforcement agencies. We work internationally on the transnational trafficking of these drugs, but we've also been working, just as importantly, in communities on restoring the harm reduction pillar of our national drug strategy. We've been investing in a number of initiatives taking place in communities to deal with the health aspects and the tragedy of those deaths. I think that work requires balance.

The national drug strategy has a number of important measures. It begins with effective supply interdiction measures. We've been investing in those things. It also requires demand reduction, harm reduction and rehabilitative treatment services. We are trying to ensure we provide a wide and comprehensive response to this opioid crisis.

I don't disagree with you. Supply interdiction is an important element, but it's not the only element. I think in years past—I was actually involved in these investigations for many years myself—a great deal of emphasis is always put on law enforcement, but we have to look at the medical consequences, treatment and support for people who have addictions to help keep them alive.

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Sadly, it seems to be getting worse over the last number of years, despite the efforts.

I want to turn to another issue that is important to all Canadians, particularly in my home province of British Columbia. That is money laundering.

Minister, money had been promised as recently as 18 months ago for more funding to fight money laundering in British Columbia,

but sadly that just has not happened. What do you intend is going to happen? Are enough resources being allocated to fighting that significant problem?

The Chair: Again, Minister—

Hon. Bill Blair: That's a great question. This is a very important question, and I need an opportunity to answer it.

Over the last two years, we have invested \$300 million in the RCMP, FINTRAC and the CRA. We've also announced the establishment of the Public Safety action, coordination and enforcement team at the CBSA centre of expertise.

As well, we've made amendments to the Criminal Code, and this month—this is very important—the RCMP was further approved for \$98 million towards the creation of the new integrated money-laundering investigative teams to replace the integrated proceeds of crime teams that the previous Conservative government eliminated in 2013. This is going to add additional officers in Alberta, Ontario, B.C. and Quebec to do the important work of dealing with organized crime money-laundering activities in this country.

Mr. Chair, this is an issue that we take very seriously, and we've come through with those investments we promised.

The Chair: Mr. Van Popta, I think you should send Minister Blair a thank you note for that time extension.

With that, we have Madam Damoff for five minutes, please.

• (1630)

Ms. Pam Damoff: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, the Canadian gun lobby recently did a cartoon of me and Minister Freeland, making fun of the fact that I've highlighted that women are killed or threatened by partners with firearms. As you know, the vast majority—I believe it's over 70%—of gun deaths in Canada are actually by suicide. In Ontario, there was just recently a report on the number of suicide deaths by firearm. They were largely of white males in rural Canada.

Recently I did a Facebook Live with Dr. Alan Drummond, whom I know you know. He's the former president of the emergency physicians here in Canada. One of the things that he has highlighted and that you've committed to, Minister, is red flag laws.

Dr. Drummond highlighted that as a physician he has a duty to report things like infectious diseases and individuals who are unsafe to drive and that it only makes sense for physicians to report people who may be at a risk to themselves or to others. I'm just wondering, Minister, if you are planning on bringing in legislation that will deal with red flag laws.

Hon. Bill Blair: Thank you very much, Ms. Damoff.

First of all, if I may, let me acknowledge that I think some of the comments made by people who work for the gun industry and the gun lobby have been reprehensible, misogynous and I think deeply offensive to the vast majority of Canadians. I wish some of the leaders of our other political parties would find the courage to denounce those activities, but allow me the opportunity to denounce them.

With respect to red flag laws, yes, Pam, we are working very hard to introduce legislation as quickly as possible that will introduce red flag laws. Red flag laws can have a very significant impact in three very important areas. The first is to deal with domestic and intimate partner violence. As you've said, the overwhelming majority of victims in domestic and intimate partner violence are women—eight out of 10—and when a firearm is present, that dangerous situation can become deadly. We want to empower women and those who support women in these dangerous circumstances to remove the danger of a firearm being present in those homes.

We also recognize and are strongly influenced and advised by Dr. Drummond and the medical community's work that 75% of all homicide deaths in this country are in fact self-inflicted. The gun lobby never wants to talk about that, but it's a reality in Canada today, so we are going to empower physicians, family and concerned citizens to be able to take action to remove firearms from those dangerous situations.

Finally, when people are online and they're spouting hate and advocating violence against women, religious minorities, ethnic minorities or any vulnerable population in this country, we have hate crime laws. They can be, in my experience, very challenging to enforce, but we need to have the tools to disarm those individuals before they can go out and engage in crimes of mass violence that have created so much tragedy in this country.

Yes, it's a priority for our government. We'll be bringing forward effective red flag legislation to ensure that Canadians have the tools they need to keep themselves safe.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Thank you, Minister, and thank you for your comments as well.

My colleague Mr. Harris brought up the recent report that came out on sexual harassment in the RCMP. I have to say that the only other report I read that was similar to that was on the Edmonton maximum security institution. They described the culture as being like the 1950s movie *The Blob*: It didn't matter how good the people were; they were consumed by this toxic culture.

Minister—and I have a similar question for Commissioner Lucki—will we be able to have an independent external review of the RCMP? This has been going on for 30 years.

I'm going to run out of time. I'm going to end my intro here. I'll give you time to respond quickly, Minister, but I'd like to get a response, perhaps from Commissioner Lucki first and then from you.

Commr Brenda Lucki: I had a bit of a microphone problem. I wonder whether you could just repeat the last part of your question.

Ms. Pam Damoff: It's about committing to an independent external review of the RCMP. It has been 30 years without being able to find a solution to this.

Commr Brenda Lucki: Regarding these unspeakable acts, I read that report and I've read it again. That's exactly the reason I applied for the job, that's why I was selected for the job and that's why I'm so committed to making that change in the RCMP.

• (1635)

Ms. Pam Damoff: Commissioner, with all respect, the report has said the change can't come from an internal review.

Commr Brenda Lucki: In my case, I'm not speaking about an internal review. I'm speaking about actions internally to change the culture, to change the governance, to change the stewardship and to change how we deal with these things internally. We're introducing an internal and independent centre for harassment resolution, which has a big prevention part to it. It's the first of its kind.

We're looking at something independent, so that people feel trust that they can come forward. In the time I've been in the chair, we've achieved gender parity on the senior executive. When I used to come into Ottawa and see the table, it was all white males. When I'm looking at the table now, it's 50% female across Canada. Out of the 15 RCMP commanding officers, almost 50% are female. You would never see that. These are actual visual changes.

The Chair: Unfortunately, we're going to have to leave that extremely important question there. Ms. Damoff is in the next round of questions, so maybe you'll want to come back to that.

With that, we're going into the third round of questions.

Mr. Kurek, you lead off. You have five minutes, please.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Minister, it's good to have you here at the committee.

With regard to RCMP funding, recently in my riding there have been brazen criminal acts not seen in many decades: a bank robbery in a community of 250, police impersonators pulling over people and robbing them and more crimes than I can outline here today. Rural crime continues to grow, and too often people in rural areas are being left to fend for themselves.

We know the RCMP has large areas to cover, especially in rural and remote areas, and there are consistent staffing challenges. Your government's response to M-167 in the last Parliament was embarrassing, and Canadians in rural and remote areas deserve to know when the issues of rural crime will be taken seriously.

Can you respond to that?

Hon. Bill Blair: Let me assure you that crime that occurs anywhere in this country is taken very seriously, and I would invite the commissioner of the RCMP to speak to how the RCMP, in the jurisdictions where they are the police of jurisdiction, respond.

Commr Brenda Lucki: Thank you, Minister.

We have rural crime programs in each and every one of our provinces. Our big successes recently have come through our crime reduction enforcement support teams that we've set up in many of the provinces in western Canada. These crime reduction enforcement teams are dedicated to rural crime. They blitz areas where rural crime is occurring. They do warrant roundups and all kinds of activities to target the prolific offenders who are committing the crimes in those areas.

We look at that part of the population, the smaller part of the population committing the most crimes. What we are doing with those teams is intelligence-led and evidence-led, and they target those areas in order to reduce those crimes. They've had great success.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Thank you very much.

Minister, I appreciate the work that is being done by RCMP officers on the ground each and every day, but it is unfortunate that... Again, I mentioned M-167 and an incredibly disappointing response from the government on rural crime. This is truly a failure of the Liberal government.

Commr Brenda Lucki: Did you mean M-157?

Mr. Damien Kurek: I'm sorry. I meant M-157.

You've said your department is primarily focused on COVID, yet we've learned in the last number of weeks that five million people have entered this country with an exemption, and we know that a number of those people who have entered Canada have done so by specific ministerial exemptions. However, it's unclear what conditions are placed on these individuals and whether they undergo any tests.

Therefore, what conditions have you approved for those persons who are able to enter the country without quarantine; and are those conditions universal with your other colleagues who are authorized by the order in council to grant those exemptions?

• (1640)

The Chair: You have about a minute and a half.

Hon. Bill Blair: Thank you very much for the important question.

Let me speak about two instances for which I issued national interest exemptions.

One was in the aftermath of a tragic death of an armed forces member—

Mr. Damien Kurek: With respect, Minister—

The Chair: Sorry, Minister—

Hon. Bill Blair: I—

Mr. Damien Kurek: I greatly appreciate the.... I'm asking what conditions were placed.

Hon. Bill Blair: Yes, and I'm—

Mr. Damien Kurek: It's not examples. What were the conditions?

Hon. Bill Blair: There were a number of family members of Canadian Armed Forces members—

The Chair: Excuse me, Minister.

Hon. Bill Blair: Yes, sir.

The Chair: Excuse me, Mr. Kurek.

I am getting some real noise in the background here, and I don't know where it's coming from. I look at the screen and everybody seems to be on mute. I'm assuming it's in the room itself.

I don't hear it now, but there was noise there.

Let's continue. You had about a minute and a half to answer the question. With that, Minister, restart your answer to the question. I apologize for the interruption.

Hon. Bill Blair: The one case was in the province of Nova Scotia, and it was for the soldier's family to be able to attend her funeral. The second case was at the request of the Alberta government. There was a sexual assault victim who was required to attend in person at trial and had to travel in from the United States in order to do so; otherwise, the province was going to lose jurisdiction and her attacker would be freed.

In those cases, we worked very closely with the Public Health Agency of Canada, the provincial public health authority and the regional health authority to ensure that appropriate measures were put in place for all the people in Nova Scotia attending the funeral and for the victim of that terrible crime to attend the trial and testify.

We provided support and accommodation to ensure they were able to isolate appropriately. They were also equipped with personal protection equipment and other support measures so that they could attend those two events, which in my opinion was absolutely necessary and right that we do.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Thank you.

Hon. Bill Blair: We worked with public health authorities to make sure that could be done safely, and at no time were the health and safety of Canadians compromised by those efforts.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Thank you very much, Minister.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Sure.

I appreciate the examples that were given, but it seems clear that there were no universal conditions. Conspicuously absent in your answers were rapid tests specifically. I think that speaks volumes about not necessarily the merits of those specific exemptions—I don't think anybody is questioning those—but the larger picture of the government response to some of these exemptions.

The Chair: Sir, you have about 15 seconds.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kurek. Thank you, Minister.

Mr. Anandasangaree, you have five minutes, please.

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the panel for being here.

Thank you Minister. It's good to see you, as always.

I want to pick up from where Mr. Harris probably left off and acknowledge your commitments to addressing the issues of systemic racism within the different areas of the criminal justice system, including the RCMP.

Minister, one of the challenges I think we've faced is a lack of clarity from the RCMP and the commissioner in terms of where we're going with this. While legislative changes are an important element, the absence of a concrete plan by the RCMP leaves quite a few unanswered questions.

I'm wondering if we can get a commitment from Commissioner Lucki, as well as you, to having a constructive plan to address the systemic issues of racism and discrimination within the RCMP, as well as the timeline by which a plan can be tabled to this committee and a timeline to implement the said plan.

Hon. Bill Blair: I thank you for a very important question, Gary.

Certainly you and I have spoken about a number of the things that the government can do in legislation, in regulation and in funding. However, I want to give the commissioner an opportunity to articulate many of the things that she has been doing in order to respond to this concern.

Commr Brenda Lucki: Thank you for that question.

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Commissioner Lucki, if I may, before you start, I think what's important is a comprehensive plan.

Can you give us a timeline as opposed to...? We know publicly some of the things you've undertaken, but I'd like a comprehensive plan that the committee could study, the road map to address systemic issues.

• (1645)

Commr Brenda Lucki: Thank you for that question.

The plan started when I got into the chair with Vision 150, but in 2020 of course the context changed, so we added another 17 initiatives to advance equity, accountability and trust in the RCMP. They're grounded in ongoing stakeholder engagement and they support and build on Vision 150.

We have brought in forums to exchange information on diversity and inclusion with national and divisional committees. We have created guides. We have a mental health advisory group. We have a new equity, diversity and inclusion strategy that includes mandatory cultural awareness and humility training. As well, we're in the process of co-developing anti-racism training. The reason we're co-developing it is to give the people most impacted by this a say in how the training is rolled out and what is included in the training.

We're doing collection and analysis of race-based data to address systemic racism and discrimination, in collaboration with our partners, while we're supporting the rollout of body-worn cameras. We're strengthening timelines in the public complaint process through an MOU with CRCC—

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Commissioner Lucki, perhaps I can just interrupt you, because time is limited.

I know there is a lot of interest in this. While I recognize that those are important initial steps, I'm still a little lost as to how all of this is going to lead to a comprehensive plan that will address the issues of systemic racism within the RCMP.

I think we're at a stage right now where the 17 points you have outlined are, I'm going to suggest, first steps. What are we going to do about the culture, about the lack of accountability and about a whole host of issues that I think are alive today?

I'm wondering if you're able or in a position to commit today to table within, say, the next four to six weeks a comprehensive plan to address systemic racism within the RCMP.

Commr Brenda Lucki: All the initiatives are on our outside website for anybody to see. There are measures—

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: With great respect, Commissioner, I think that's inadequate. I respectfully ask you to look at this much more deeply and to come back with a plan, because I think since our initial conversation back in the summer, we have had this discussion a number of times and, at almost six months in, I don't think we have a road map or a plan.

Can we expect a comprehensive plan from you, apart from what's on the website, to address systemic racism within the next several weeks?

The Chair: Be very brief, please.

Hon. Bill Blair: Gary, if I may respond to that, I'm aware that the SECU committee is actually doing its own study, and I think the work of parliamentarians in this regard is really important and will inform the government and the RCMP in appropriate steps forward.

We also indicated in the throne speech our intention to bring about significant reform in every element of the criminal justice system. I know the Attorney General and I have had a number of conversations in this regard. The work is important, but it must be comprehensive.

I'm not entirely sure that the timelines you prescribe are appropriate for an undertaking of this importance, but I want to assure you and this committee of our absolute and unwavering commitment to do that work and to be informed by the important work that the SECU committee is doing.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Mr. Anandasangaree.

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Thank you, Minister.

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Simard, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

Mr. Mario Simard: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I have a quick question for Ms. Tessier.

This summer, I read an article in *The Globe and Mail* about how CSIS was concerned with the potential for intellectual property theft in university exchanges, mostly by Chinese students.

Are you only concerned about China?

Ms. Michelle Tessier: Thank you for your question.

We are concerned that any hostile state could engage in intellectual property theft in Canada. We have pointed out that the threat comes from a number of countries. I can't go into details for all countries, but China is one of them. There are others, but for operational reasons we can't discuss them in detail.

We continue to stress to members of the community that it's important that they protect themselves. We're working in partnership with universities and vulnerable sectors so that they can protect themselves. That in particular is our current focus.

• (1650)

Mr. Mario Simard: Does CSIS have any right to review visa applications from foreign students or researchers?

Ms. Michelle Tessier: For some visa categories, we give opinions to our colleagues at the Canada Border Services Agency and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada on the threat an individual may pose, but the decision is theirs. Our role is to conduct a security assessment of applicants based on certain criteria.

Mr. Mario Simard: How can you distinguish between intellectual property theft and the sharing of basic scientific discoveries, which is common in academia? Who decides this at CSIS? Do you have the academic community's support?

Ms. Michelle Tessier: We recognize the importance of being able to work in a shared environment, especially in academia.

As I said earlier, we work with universities to give them information and advice on how to protect themselves. For us, it's very important that it be a partnership and that they clearly understand the issues. But we are very aware that it's important for them to be able to continue doing their work while also knowing what the risks are and what areas might be vulnerable.

Mr. Mario Simard: In that sense—

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Simard.

Mr. Harris, you have two and a half minutes, please.

Mr. Jack Harris: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and the minister can answer the question on the staffing as well as respond to this additional point.

More disturbing in Mr. Zinger's appearance before the committee earlier this month was his statement that he regards the Correctional Service of Canada as having an attitude or a long track record of dismissing the ombudsman's recommendations and being unresponsive not only to his recommendations but also to the recommendations that have come forward from other commissions, and this despite the agreement of the government on these things.

My question is as follows: Do you feel that you have sufficient authority or actual control over the actions taken by the Correctional Service of Canada in response to these recommendations and in response to your agreement to them?

Hon. Bill Blair: Thanks very much, Jack, and I think these are very important questions.

I work very closely with Dr. Zinger and I very sincerely value his observations and his advice in these regards. I also had the opportunity to work previously in another capacity with his predecessor, Dr. Sapers, and I think their work is invaluable and I very much support it.

I think it's also important that CSC responds appropriately to these recommendations, and it is my responsibility as the minister to ensure that the Correctional Service of Canada pays appropriate attention and responds in an appropriate way to the recommendations and observations made by Dr. Zinger. I believe that in my brief tenure in this office, the relationship between the correctional investigator, the Correctional Service of Canada and the public safety ministry has been very, very positive and productive. I believe that we'll continue to work collaboratively together.

If I may also respond to your earlier question with respect to staffing issues, the additional monies that are requested are staffing requirements for the implementation of Bill C-83, the introduction and the full build-out of the SIUs across the country. It is a resource-intensive activity to ensure that those inmates receive the supports and services and the time in various functions and that there are people there to make sure that it happens. We're making those additional investments because it is part of our legal obligation to ensure that those SIUs are properly implemented.

If I may quickly reference the work of Dr. Doob, I think he identifies for us that there's a lot more to do.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Harris.

With that, we go to Mr. Motz for five minutes, please.

Mr. Glen Motz: Sorry; it will be Ms. Stubbs. I know you're disappointed, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Is it Ms. Stubbs? I was told it would be you.

Mr. Glen Motz: I know you're disappointed, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: One of us is disappointed, yes.

Hon. Bill Blair: I'm inconsolable, Mr. Chair.

• (1655)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: We're going to cope.

Go ahead, Shannon.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just following up on my last question and linked to CSIS's work, Minister, are you aware that Alireza Onghaei is identified by CSIS as under investigation for participating in clandestine foreign influence operations for the Islamic Republic of Iran?

Hon. Bill Blair: Shannon, by the way, my inconsolability wasn't related to you but only to missing an opportunity to talk to Glen. I wanted to assure you of that.

Yes, I have an awareness, and I'm regularly briefed by CSIS and the RCMP on the important work they do. As I'm sure you will understand, I am not prepared to discuss that advice or the information that we receive.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Okay.

I asked a question about politically exposed persons. I guess, then, related to that, do you know that an Alireza Onghaei donated \$240 to Liberal MP Majid Jowhari's riding association on December 3, 2019?

I'm also just looking at a picture of Onghaei with that MP in Parliament's Centre Block. Would you forgive me for asking if this is related, then, to your government's refusal to list Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist entity, in defiance of the will of Parliament that you yourself voted for in June 2018?

Hon. Bill Blair: They are two very separate issues. I appreciate your highlighting them so I can have the opportunity to explain that the determination on listing is not a political act. It is an act that is informed by our intelligence services and by the RCMP, who conduct very comprehensive investigations and provide advice based on the law and the evidence to make a determination on whether or not people are listed. There is absolutely no correlation whatsoever between that totally independent and important activity by CSIS and the RCMP, working, frankly, with me and the government in determining—

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: What are you doing to ensure that the will of Parliament is going to happen, which is to list that entity as a terrorist organization?

Hon. Bill Blair: Certainly we have asked that CSIS and the RCMP continue to do their very important work of gathering the evidence and making assessments based on the law—

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Okay, it's been two years. We'll follow up again, I guess, to see if you've done your role there, but I need to move on, Minister.

Hon. Bill Blair: No, but the law hasn't changed with respect—

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: I need to move on, Minister.

Mohamed—

Hon. Bill Blair: —to the listing of terrorist organizations, and we're following the law.

The Chair: Okay. Again, it's better that we don't talk over each other.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Right, but Parliament has given direction. It would be your job to ensure that it's executed.

Sorry; thanks, Chair.

Mohamed Hersi was arrested in 2011 and sentenced in 2014 to 10 years for trying to join a terrorist group. He is deemed a high risk to reoffend due to extremist ideologies and violent behaviour and is clearly a threat to others.

Under the conditional release act, offenders are not supposed to be given statutory release when they're a threat to others. Why is he going to be back on the streets before his sentence is up, Minister?

Hon. Bill Blair: Again, the Parole Board can, and does, impose conditions on any offender who is available for statutory release, which it did in this case. Those determinations are made independently by the Parole Board of Canada. They impose conditions, again independent of any political consideration, and all offenders in those circumstances must report regularly to the Correctional Service of Canada parole officer.

I would invite our Parole Board chair to add any comment she believes is appropriate in responding to your concern.

The Chair: You have about one minute.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: She could follow later on that, Minister. I just need to hold you accountable, because you do have an option. You can ensure the legislation is applied correctly. The Parole Board has deemed Mr. Hersi a high risk to reoffend, so he clearly shouldn't be eligible for statutory release.

In 2019, five additional people convicted of terrorism-related offences were released under statutory release provisions. The Parole Board deemed four of those individuals as still radicalized and remaining as high risks. Why is the Parole Board's guidance not being followed in these cases?

Again, in terms of what you are going to do, you should know that in February the U.K. passed emergency legislation to ensure that those convicted of terrorist offences serve full sentences and are not granted early statutory release. That was a result of two separate incidents in which there were releases who then carried out a terrorist attack. As the public safety minister, it's literally your job to ensure that legislation and policies are being enforced right now, and you also have the option to take legislative action to fix this problem.

Hon. Bill Blair: Briefly, I'd simply remind the member that under our government, we've taken far more action, and far more effective action, in dealing with these individuals. In fact, we brought eight of these offenders to court and to justice, and I compare that with the dismal record of zero under the previous government. We've also committed to supporting prosecution authorities, bringing forward and appointing a director of terrorism prosecutions.

Mr. Chair, our officials are doing their job—

• (1700)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Well, I've just given you six examples of severe threats to public safety in Canada right now—

The Chair: I am unfortunately going to have to—

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:—so with all due respect, after half a decade of power, you should actually fix the problem instead of blaming previous governments.

The Chair: I'm unfortunately going to have to bring this—

Hon. Bill Blair: You left us with so many problems.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair:—scintillating exchange to a close.

Mr. Glen Motz: Chair, I think maybe Minister Blair would want me back now.

The Chair: You are starting to look pretty good, Mr. Motz.

Colleagues, we have the minister for another 15 minutes. Madam Damoff has five minutes to finish off this round.

Could you indicate to the clerk whether you want a truncated fourth round? My proposal would be something like two minutes each, and maybe a minute for the Bloc and the NDP, so it would be two, two, one, one, two, two. That would bring us to the end and our votes.

With that, we go to Madam Damoff.

Could you indicate to the clerk immediately? Thank you.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Thank you, Chair.

Commissioner, when you were here last time, I asked you about the report on Colten Boushie. This weekend I'm interviewing his family as part of a panel that I'm doing.

When I asked you about the report last time, I wasn't aware that there are actually 149 interim reports awaiting a response until I read about it in a November 10, 2020, article. One report is more than four years old, 14 are three to four years, 44 are two to three years, 49 are one to two years, and 41 files are for less than a year.

As we've been looking at systemic racism in policing, I think probably one of the most important things we've heard is on accountability and consequences when there are things that go wrong, and Commissioner, these numbers are just unacceptable.

First, it's three and a half weeks until the end of fall. Will the Boushie family get the report released publicly before then? Second, what are you doing to deal with this backlog?

Commr Brenda Lucki: After you asked me that question about the Boushie report, I went back to my team and really pushed the

envelope. Lots of information was given to us from the CRCC in January, and I have been told I will have that report on my desk on December 4 and I will work through the weekend to get through it. It will go back to CRCC and it will be up to them to release it. We don't release it.

I get the report on December 4. I'm going to work through the weekend on it and make sure that I'm prepared to release it to the CRCC shortly after that.

Ms. Pam Damoff: What about the other 149 reports that are outstanding?

Commr Brenda Lucki: Those aren't public interest investigations like the Colten Boushie report. Colten Boushie's was specific. They're much lengthier in time.

You're right that we need to get better. Canadians deserve better when we talk about timelines, whether it is ATIP or CRCC reports. We've created an MOU with the CRCC with the service standard. We need to get rid of the backlog, and we're committed to getting rid of the backlog in 2021 and not having a backlog. We're hiring more people to do those reviews and provide those responses. There is absolute commitment on the part of my team that we will eliminate the backlog and be more timely in our responses within the service standard that we're setting out.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Okay.

Mr. Stewart, I have a question for you. We had Dr. Zinger here a few weeks ago, and one of the things he said in his report was that he's just tired of recommending things to CSC because they just don't listen.

Have you met with Dr. Zinger, and what are you doing to ensure that some of these recommendations are being implemented by CSC? One of them particularly had to do with employment training in the institution.

Mr. Rob Stewart (Deputy Minister, Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness): I have not met Dr. Zinger as yet, owing largely, I think, to the COVID pandemic and the occupation of doing other things. However, the minister has, and I have spoken with the minister about Dr. Zinger and his report and I have talked to the commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada about the report and about the agenda. Of course, the department and the staff had worked with the Correctional Service to respond and to ensure that those responses embed the views of the minister. We are actively working to try to pursue the agenda that Dr. Zinger has laid out for the Correctional Service, again taking into account some of the barriers that are imposed by the COVID pandemic.

• (1705)

Ms. Pam Damoff: Okay. Thank you. I think I have a minute left, right, or just under.

I do recommend you meet with him. I just spoke with him not too long ago. There's a lot of really good stuff happening there.

To the person from corrections, do we have results of the FASD pilot project that was being done at the Regional Psychiatric Centre in Saskatoon? If you could send them to us, that would be great.

Mr. Alain Tousignant (Senior Deputy Commissioner, Correctional Service of Canada): Thank you. I don't have those results with me currently, but we will make sure to forward them. I will do a follow-up and make sure that you receive the information you're looking for.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Okay, and also, if the results were good, can it be expanded to all of the institutions? I know that's a challenge all of our correctional facilities face.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

All I have is Mr. Motz for two minutes, and the Liberals could indicate whom they wish to have for the next two minutes.

Mr. Glen Motz: Thank you very much, Chair.

My question is again directed at Minister Blair. I'll be gentle with you this time, Bill.

The total dollar amount of your portfolio, both statutorily and voted upon, will be \$10 to \$10.7 billion, up \$2.2 billion from 2015, but as you know, sir, since 2015, Canada has faced a growing opioid crisis, a growing number of shootings, a higher urban crime rate, a higher rural crime rate, a higher violent crime rate, growing court backlogs, fewer victims' rights, questions around the strengths of the correctional system, questions around the parole system, questions on police oversight and issues of foreign interference and foreign influence. There have been deep concerns raised by nearly every department under your watch, and more money, yet worse results. Clearly, your plan is failing.

Minister Blair, I have to tell you that I personally believe you're better than this. Do you intend to present a new, real plan that addresses public safety, or do you intend to continue down the current path with these failed results?

Hon. Bill Blair: Thank you, Glen. Thank you personally for the vote of confidence that you're offering to me.

I will tell you that one of the challenges our government faced was trying to recover from the deficit reduction action plan of the previous government, which cut \$900 million—almost half a billion dollars—from the RCMP and nearly \$400 million from CBSA and made cuts to all of our national security agencies, including the Correctional Service of Canada, right across the board. These were massive cuts. They necessitated the elimination of police units and intelligence units that were doing really important work in this country.

When we came in, we began the long and sometimes challenging process of rebuilding that capacity and getting police services back up to the strength that they needed. I think the cuts that were made were, frankly, reckless and irresponsible, and they've had very long impacts.

For example, you eliminated all of the integrated proceeds of crime units in the country and the expertise that those units repre-

sented. There were police officers who had spent decades conducting crime investigations; we lost them—

The Chair: I'm going to have to—

Mr. Glen Motz: I had one more question, Chair.

The Chair: I know you have tons of questions, Mr. Motz, but your time is way past. This was a brief interlude of harmony that apparently has dissipated quite rapidly.

With that, Madam Khera, you have two minutes, please.

Ms. Kamal Khera: Thank you, Chair.

Commissioner Lucki, my next question is for you. My question is the same question I asked you the last time you were here, but we ran out of time to get an answer, so I'll try today.

There have been many calls for a reconstruction of the RCMP to remove contract policing. We have heard this from numerous witnesses, who said that the RCMP is too big and has too many roles, which makes it difficult, if not impossible, to govern, and that the RCMP needs to get out of contract policing.

We certainly saw the shortcomings of contract policing just recently in the RCMP's failed approach to advancing indigenous reconciliation. In fact, we've seen quite the opposite.

Can you comment on whether you think the current RCMP contracting model is a good idea, considering your mandate to advance indigenous reconciliation, or should it be removed?

• (1710)

Commr Brenda Lucki: I will go off the minister's previous comments, in the sense that when properly funded, the model is very strong. It's flexible and it's nimble in its ability to move resources when situations arise, such as forest fires in Fort McMurray or a terrorist investigation in Kingston. We can bring specialized resources in when we wouldn't have all of those in Kingston, bring them in, front-end load an investigation and work toward solving those crimes. It gives us the flexibility to move the resources, but it needs to be properly funded.

We are doing a review of policing, of contract policing itself, and how it interworks with federal policing, to make sure that the model is sustainable and that the model is serving the needs of Canadians and meeting the expectations of a safe Canada.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Madame Khera.

[Translation]

Mr. Simard, you have the floor for one minute.

Mr. Mario Simard: I have a quick and friendly question for Minister Blair.

Later on in the House, we will be having an exploratory debate on French. On many occasions, I have been at border crossings and had trouble being served in French.

Does the Minister have an action plan or vision for improving French-language services at the Canada Border Services Agency?

[*English*]

Hon. Bill Blair: Thank you very much for a very important question. I want to assure the member that we are absolutely committed to ensuring that our services at CBSA and in every part of our portfolio are offered in both official languages.

I would invite President Ossowski to speak specifically to CBSA's effort in that regard.

The Chair: You have 15 seconds, please.

Mr. John Ossowski: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just reiterate the minister's commitment and my own personal commitment to doing better in this regard. We get complaints on this from time to time and we follow up to make sure officers on the front line are fully aware of their obligations to provide services in both official languages.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Simard.

[*English*]

We go now to Mr. Harris for one minute.

Mr. Jack Harris: Thank you, Chair.

The issue of being properly funded is important for the needs of indigenous policing in Canada, which has long been regarded as under-resourced and underfunded.

Could you, Mr. Blair, point to anywhere in the main estimates we've been given today where we can see the \$275 million that is supposed to be allocated for indigenous policing? Does this appear in the main estimates before us?

Hon. Bill Blair: Thank you very much, Jack.

I'm advised that through the main estimates, a total of \$167.5 million in contribution funding is being sought for a first nations policing program for 2020-21. Additionally, our government announced \$88.6 million in contribution funding over seven years for policing facilities in first nations and Inuit communities under a program that is separate from but complementary to first nations policing.

Finally, Jack, let me advise you we're working very closely with the Assembly of First Nations and the national chief. We are providing additional resources to allow them to engage with us and work comprehensively and effectively in the co-production of a new legislative framework for first nations policing that would make it an essential service in this country.

I agree with you that the inevitable outcome of that new framework will be a recognition of additional funding that will be required. We'll bring that forward after that work is near conclusion.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Harris.

I think that brings to a conclusion the minister's appearance before the committee.

I need guidance from my colleagues as to whether we'll have officials continue until 5:30. I'm not quite sure, in this hybrid setting, how you could indicate to the chair that you wish to continue.

The alternative is to move to the votes, of which there are at least two. The first are the main estimates, and then there are the supplementary estimates. I will need the clerk's guidance as to whether we do a roll call vote or whether we do an indication vote.

First of all, is there an appetite to continue beyond the minister's presence here?

Mr. Jack Harris: I'd just like a follow-up from someone—perhaps from the RCMP or department officials—on the last question I had with respect to the \$275 million. This was supposed to be new money to deal with making indigenous policing an essential service. I don't see, in the answer of the minister, that there's actually that much new money. There's existing funding that's available...unless someone can correct that.

• (1715)

The Chair: If I'm giving Mr. Harris a question, I feel I'll have to give the other parties questions.

Mr. Glen Motz: With all due respect to Mr. Harris, Mr. Chair, we would certainly enjoy another question or two, at least until it's time to do the vote. We would have to ask it in order.

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

Perhaps we could just ask for a written response from someone to the committee at a later date.

The Chair: Okay, that would solve that problem.

Is there appetite to ask any other questions?

Seeing none, we'll move to call the question. Because we're in this hybrid situation and I don't feel overly confident that I know how to do this, the first question, as I understand it, is on the main estimates, and it's votes 1, 5 and 10. I'm going to look to the clerk to guide us.

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

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Harris.

Mr. Jack Harris: Last night we had the same issue with foreign affairs, of course at the end of the meeting, and the question was put as to whether or not the committee was prepared to pass the estimates on division, without a vote. I think it was agreed by the committee that this was a proper way for them to proceed, and that's what was done. I think the clerk there talked about that, and maybe the clerk can give advice on that as well.

The Chair: That's what I was seeking, Mr. Harris, but I thank you for that guidance.

Go ahead, Mr. Clerk.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Mark D'Amore): It's however the committee wishes to proceed. They can group them. They can vote on division. They can look at them individually.

The Chair: We have to have two votes, though, one on the main estimates and one on the supplementaries, right?

The Clerk: That's correct. It's one on the main estimates and one on the supplementaries—

The Chair: The first question will be on the main estimates. On those, can we move forward on division? Is that appropriate?

Mr. Glen Motz: Yes, it can be on division, Mr. Chair, on our side.

Mr. Jack Harris: On division.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Yes.

The Chair: We're agreeable to that?

Is that sufficient for the formalities of reporting, Mr. Clerk? It is.

CANADA BORDER SERVICES AGENCY

Vote 1—Operating expenditures.....\$1,822,908,053

Vote 5—Capital expenditures.....\$177,772,983

(Votes 1 and 5 agreed to on division)

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Vote 1—Program expenditures.....\$598,034,351

(Vote 1 agreed to on division)

CIVILIAN REVIEW AND COMPLAINTS COMMISSION FOR THE ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Vote 1—Program expenditures.....\$9,284,989

(Vote 1 agreed to on division)

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA

Vote 1—Operating expenditures, grants and contributions.....\$2,145,688,776

Vote 5—Capital expenditures.....\$187,796,912

(Votes 1 and 5 agreed to on division)

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Vote 1—Operating expenditures.....\$143,921,366

Vote 5—Grants and contributions.....\$565,749,061

(Votes 1 and 5 agreed to on division)

NATIONAL SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE REVIEW AGENCY SECRETARIAT

Vote 1—Program expenditures.....\$22,801,056

(Vote 1 agreed to on division)

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONAL INVESTIGATOR OF CANADA

Vote 1—Program expenditures.....\$4,735,703

(Vote 1 agreed to on division)

PAROLE BOARD OF CANADA

Vote 1—Program expenditures.....\$41,877,803

(Vote 1 agreed to on division)

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Vote 1—Operating expenditures.....\$2,610,780,627

Vote 5—Capital expenditures.....\$249,275,558

Vote 10—Grants and contributions.....\$195,339,283

(Votes 1, 5 and 10 agreed to on division)

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE EXTERNAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

Vote 1—Program expenditures.....\$2,894,153

(Vote 1 agreed to on division)

SECRETARIAT OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS

Vote 1—Program expenditures.....\$3,331,078

(Vote 1 agreed to on division)

The Chair: The second vote is on the supplementary estimates. Shall I ask whether that is to move on division?

Ms. Pam Damoff: Yes, on division.

Mr. Jack Harris: Yes, on division.

Mr. Glen Motz: On division.

The Chair:

CANADA BORDER SERVICES AGENCY

Vote 1b—Operating expenditures.....\$ 7,690,722

Vote 5b—Capital expenditures.....\$32,000

(Votes 1b and 5b agreed to on division)

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Vote 1b—Program expenditures.....\$2,046,981

(Vote 1b agreed to on division)

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA

Vote 1b—Operating expenditures, grants and contributions.....\$130,549,259

(Vote 1b agreed to on division)

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Vote 1b—Operating expenditures.....\$3,797,487

Vote 5b—Grants and contributions.....\$ 13,370,400

(Votes 1b and 5b agreed to on division)

PAROLE BOARD OF CANADA

Vote 1b—Program expenditures.....\$3,200,000

(Vote 1b agreed to on division)

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Vote 1b—Operating expenditures.....\$7,682,839

Vote 5b—Capital expenditures.....\$6,768,607

(Votes 1b and 5b agreed to on division)

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE EXTERNAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

Vote 1b—Program expenditures.....\$1,777,368

(Vote 1b agreed to on division)

The Chair: Shall I report the will of the committee to the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: I'll have Mr. Motz stand beside me when I do that.

Mr. Glen Motz: Thanks, Chair.

The Chair: Okay, have we completed the formalities, Mr. Clerk, to be able to move forward?

The Clerk: Yes, we have.

The Chair: Okay. Now, colleagues, just for information, number one, as you know, on Monday there is going to be the fall economic statement. That falls right into our time slot, and in informal conversations with you, we're proposing that we cancel our time at that time.

Is that acceptable to colleagues?

Mr. Jack Harris: Agreed.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Glen Motz: Agreed.

The Chair: The second thing is that we have Mr. Justice Bas-tarache coming to the committee on Wednesday, a week from to-day. We're proposing that he have two hours. Is that agreeable to the committee?

Ms. Pam Damoff: Yes.

Mr. Jack Harris: Agreed.

The Chair: Okay.

Thank you, colleagues. That gives us guidance to go forward, and then we'll have to deal with the final week or two of sittings.

With that, the meeting is adjourned.

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