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Chair: The Honourable Bardish Chagger



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• (1105)

[*English*]

The Chair (Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 28 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

The committee is meeting today to continue its work on the operational security of the parliamentary precinct along Wellington and Sparks Streets.

I would like to welcome the following witnesses: Patrick McDonnell, Sergeant-at-Arms and corporate security officer; and Larry Brookson, director with the Parliamentary Protective Service.

I would like to welcome you to the PROC committee. Thank you for coming back to join us.

I'll just remind all members that all comments should be made through the chair.

With that, we'll start with Mr. Brookson.

Mr. Larry Brookson (Acting Director, Parliamentary Protective Service): Good morning, Madam Chair and honourable members.

[*Translation*]

I am pleased to be with you today to contribute to this committee's exchanges on matters of physical security.

As the acting director of the Parliamentary Protection Service, I can assure you that being invited to take part in this dialogue is heartening and of critical importance to me and my colleagues.

[*English*]

While I will keep my opening remarks brief, I propose highlighting a few key points.

The first involve collaboration and partnerships. The service is responsible for the physical security of parliamentarians, staff and employees, visitors, buildings, grounds and assets on Parliament Hill and in the precinct. To fulfill this mandate, the service must continue to be proactive in how it networks and builds partnerships with its security and law enforcement partners. How well the service responds to any complex threat or situation is not just a measure of where it is, that day. It is also a reflection of how it has prioritized trust and relationship-building over time.

[*Translation*]

These relationships, whether with our parliamentary corporate security partners, or with external organizations, were key to how we responded to the occupation for those 23 days this past winter and will continue to be pivotal to our operational readiness in the future.

When it comes to continuous improvement of the service, no matter how well an organization responds to a situation, there are always lessons learned. In 2020, when I was chief operations officer for the service, I created a unit dedicated to ensuring that our operations were provided with mechanisms for proactively applying lessons learned to how we conduct our readiness and response operations.

[*English*]

Through critical activities like scenario-based training and tabletop exercises, this team, called the operation evaluation and continuous improvement unit, now plays a key role in the service's ability to learn from its response to any complex event and helps ensure that findings are integrated across the service. The OEI is key to ensuring the service optimizes every learning opportunity it uncovers.

Finally, I want to raise a point about taking a multi-layered approach to physical security. Physical security is not solely about having strong barriers, optimally trained protection officers or advanced technology. Rather, it's about the triangulation of all three of these elements.

[*Translation*]

Our service's operational readiness and response capacity is really a function of how physical barriers, human assets and technology work together to create an integrated physical security system to optimally serve our parliamentary community.

[*English*]

As a last word, I recognize that today's exchange is conducted in a public manner. I will do all I can to contribute to the discussion while respecting the confidential nature of certain details.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Go ahead, Mr. McDonnell.

Mr. Patrick McDonnell (Sergeant-at-Arms and Corporate Security Officer, House of Commons): Thank you, Madam Chair.

[*Translation*]

Hello, my name is Patrick McDonnell and I am the Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Commons.

Thank you for inviting me, once again, to address your committee. As you know, I appeared before your committee on February 8 to discuss security issues, and I was accompanying—

[*English*]

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Madam Chair, there is no French or English interpretation.

The Chair: We have it in the room, but I guess it's not working online.

[*Translation*]

Is it working now?

Ms. Block, can you hear me?

[*English*]

Mrs. Kelly Block: Yes.

The Chair: Perfect. Thank you for that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Patrick McDonnell: Should I start over?

[*English*]

The Chair: Sure.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Patrick McDonnell: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning. My name is Patrick McDonnell and I am the Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Commons. Thank you for inviting me, once again, to address your committee.

As you know, I appeared before your committee on February 8 to discuss security issues, and I was with the deputy clerk of the administration on April 28, 2022, to discuss the possibility of expanding the parliamentary precinct.

[*English*]

I will be cautious about speaking openly about sensitive matters involving security on the Hill and MPs' security off the Hill.

Security matters, when discussed before the Board of Internal Economy, are legislatively mandated under the Parliament of Canada Act to be discussed in camera. Some information, if made public, could increase the vulnerability of the House of Commons security posture, the Parliament buildings, parliamentarians and other persons within the parliamentary precinct.

As head of the Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms and Corporate Security, I note that my team works in close collaboration with its partners to provide a secure environment for members of Parliament, employees and visitors on the Hill. Simply put, our job is to ensure safe and secure access for members, their staff and the administration once they arrive on the precinct.

Working in tandem with our partners in the Parliamentary Protective Service and the Senate Corporate Security, we adapt our practices proactively and continuously, while also responding to evolving security risks. My colleagues in PPS are responsible for the physical security of members within the precinct, and the police of jurisdiction is responsible for the physical safety of all citizens off the precinct, which we know begins at the north sidewalk of Wellington Street.

In these challenging times, things move quickly. New threats are constantly emerging, so it is worth repeating that in no way can we work in isolation. We collaborate closely with our partners, both on and off the Hill, for a coordinated approach to ensure the safety of its people, assets and heritage.

● (1110)

[*Translation*]

I repeat: our primary function is to ensure the safety of members. We recognize that prevention and early intervention can defuse threats and dangers to them.

As I said, I am happy to testify, but you will understand, I hope, that I am not at liberty to say everything, given that the meeting is public.

Thank you.

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

[*English*]

We appreciate the comments that have been shared this morning.

We will enter into six-minute rounds, but I want to remind members that we will be entering into a vote, so the bells will be starting shortly.

Is there a desire from members to do as we did last time: continue comments and questions for about 20 minutes and then return to the chamber well in time for the vote?

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): We have 10 minutes to get to the chamber. That's sufficient.

The Chair: Perfect. I would ask that the screen for the bells be turned on once the bells start, and I'll keep an eye on that.

Six-minute rounds are starting.

Mr. Vis will commence, followed by Ms. Sahota, Madame Gaudreau and Ms. Blaney.

Mr. Brad Vis: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Through you, Madam Chair, thanks to Mr. Brookson and Mr. McDonnell for being present here today.

Through you, Madam Chair, did the Parliamentary Protective Service request that the Government of Canada invoke the Emergencies Act in February?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, no.

Mr. Brad Vis: Through you, Madam Chair, to each of our witnesses, did the Royal Canadian Mounted Police provide you with all of the support—personnel, material or technical—that you requested immediately upon your request during the “freedom convoy” protests? Were there any shortcomings in the support provided?

Mr. Larry Brookson: The specifics of the question speak to the request that was made just to have situational awareness on the vehicles that were parked out front on Wellington.

The request for CBRNE sensing was made to the national division of the RCMP, not to Ottawa police officers. That's not their mandate.

Unfortunately, that was not fulfilled, simply because of the technology gap that the RCMP had in what would be required to be detected. It was considered to be unsafe for some of those members to walk through that street and sense vehicles.

Mr. Brad Vis: The Parliamentary Protective Service is a security service. Policing and security are two very different professions, with different workforces, career paths and skill sets.

Would both witnesses agree with that statement?

• (1115)

Mr. Larry Brookson: Are we talking specifically about the RCMP or Parliamentary—

Mr. Brad Vis: No, the Parliamentary Protective Service.

Mr. Larry Brookson: Would you be kind enough to repeat that question?

Mr. Brad Vis: Policing and security are two very different professions, with different workforces, career paths and skill sets.

Is that a correct statement?

Mr. Larry Brookson: I'll speak only to the protective mandate that the Parliamentary Protective Service holds.

To be clear, the Parliamentary Protective Service is not a policing organization, so it does not have a policing mandate. The recruiting that the service undertakes is to ensure that all requirements of delivering the mandate of protecting parliamentarians, staffers and members of the public are secured.

Mr. Brad Vis: Would an expanded physical jurisdiction for the PPS, with the same legal mandate, be a feasible undertaking?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Yes, it would.

Mr. Brad Vis: In your opening comments, Mr. McDonell, you referenced what took place.

I was in my office the first day after Parliament was functioning. It was shut down for one day. I remember having the news on in the background in my office when I was writing my speech on the Emergencies Act. There were lots of emails going back and forth and coming up on my computer screen about whether we could enter the precinct or not, even though Parliament was open that day.

I remember seeing on TV literally a hundred RCMP officers and protesters outside my office near the Valour Building, and getting these emails at the same time. I remember I had to walk down through the protests, and the RCMP officers were there. When I got to the gates of Parliament, the gates were locked. I thought, wow, if I were ever in a crazy constitutional predicament, it would be right now.

Can you speak to the protocol, or lessons learned, in that situation? I don't think there have been many times in the history of Canada when, literally, the gates of Parliament were locked. As a member, my privilege was being compromised in that moment, when I was prevented from entering Parliament itself when we were debating the Emergencies Act.

Would either of you like to comment on that situation? I know I'm probably not the only member of Parliament who has raised that scenario with you in the last few months.

Mr. Patrick McDonell: I am trying to recall that day, and I think the barrier, the gate, was locked. It should have been unlocked when you came up. Prior to that, and during the overnight hours and early morning, people were being referred mostly to Bank and Wellington, so it was an oversight, if I recall the date correctly, that the gate was not open, keeping you on the other side and preventing you from coming up. It's one of those things that shouldn't have happened, so it's a lesson learned.

At the same time, there was a lot going on on that particular day, and people were multi-tasked, so I can understand the oversight. However, I am also quite understanding of the anxiety one would feel at arriving at a locked gate, when one had to get into the chamber for a debate.

Mr. Brad Vis: Especially during the invocation of the Emergencies Act, no less.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Sahota, over to you.

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Well, I think as we're debating now, or will start debating, the hybrid Parliament, I think it's good to be able to say that there are still benefits. Even that day, while people were locked out, you could log in through hybrid Parliament and participate in debate, as I'm able to do today. Even though I have COVID, I'm able to participate today. I'm thankful for that.

Mr. Brookson, regarding the lockdown that took place on June 11, I'm wondering if you could walk me through the occurrence of events. When did the call regarding the incident or suspicious activity come in? Who did the call come in through, and when did it reach you and then the Ottawa Police Service?

• (1120)

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, that call came in just before noon. This was information that was received by our partners with respect to intelligence at the time that was suggesting a serious threat.

My position has been clear in delivering this mandate and making—

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Which partners, Mr. Brookson?

Mr. Larry Brookson: It would have been the RCMP and Ottawa Police Service. I'm sorry for that lack of clarification.

I've always made it clear that my threshold for ensuring the protection and security of parliamentarians, staffers and the public is much lower than what would be found in the criminal element of the mandates for policing services. On the information that was received, to me it was without hesitation that we shut down Parliament due to the threats that had been received.

With respect to the investigational part of it, that falls back to the law enforcement partners. Specifically, the Ottawa Police Service is the lead to conduct an investigation. The Parliamentary Protective Service has no mandate for Criminal Code investigations. As I've indicated already, it's not a policing organization.

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Have any conversations taken place regarding an investigation as to the person who called in the hoax?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, I leave that to the police force of jurisdiction to carry out their mandate of conducting that Criminal Code investigation.

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Do you believe the PPS will be involved at some point in that investigation?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, no. I don't anticipate any involvement in that, nor would I seek to have involvement in that aspect.

Ms. Ruby Sahota: What do you believe the cost for the lockdown that day may have been?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, unfortunately, I don't have those costs. We definitely brought in additional resources to secure the precinct, but I don't have those numbers with me. My apologies.

Ms. Ruby Sahota: The action that was taken that day was swift, and we were notified. Unfortunately, I believe the French notification went out a bit later than the English notification.

Do you believe the action that was taken was due in part to the lessons learned from the convoy?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, I'm not going to speculate. I assess things on the information that's put in front of me. I work with exactly what's in front of me. I don't conject or add anything into it.

I'll reiterate that I take very seriously my role and responsibility of ensuring the protection of parliamentarians, staffers and members of the public when they are on the precinct.

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Through you, Madam Chair, in his previous presentation to this committee, Mr. Brookson said there was con-

cern during the convoy that there could be, possibly, possession of materials or explosives or other things—

The Chair: I'm just going to pause here, Ms. Sahota, and give a reminder that the last time these witnesses appeared at our committee, it was an in camera session.

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Thank you for that.

There have been articles published, stating that there were concerns as to what the convoy protesters could have had in their possession. I'm just wondering why, at that time, there was no such swift action taken.

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, I can't get into the details as to the security and the information we had on hand at that time.

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Okay.

Madam Chair, I'm wondering if I could share the rest of my time with Mr. Turnbull.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Turnbull.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Thanks, Chair, and thanks to both of you for being here today.

When the Ottawa Police Service was here and testified, I asked them about MP and staff security and harassment during the occupation of Ottawa. They had no information on that. I assume that's because PPS really has the mandate for MP security and safety.

Mr. Brookson, I'm wondering if you can speak to this: How frequent were the threats and security concerns shared by MPs and their staff during the occupation?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, I can speak to only my presence within the building. We did receive information, and rightfully so. We had members of Parliament who were trying to walk through crowds of individuals, which I had no situational awareness of. I was equally concerned about some of the concerns I was hearing from parliamentarians.

I don't have or can't speak to respective numbers or calls for service.

• (1125)

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Without a specific number, would you say that MPs and their staff had daily ongoing concerns throughout that occupation?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, it's my role to have those concerns for members of Parliament. I can tell you how concerned I was throughout that period. I was extremely concerned. It's the responsibility of my role and of the service to take on those concerns and make sure the necessary pieces are in place to ensure as much protection as we can.

I'll defer, Madam Chair, to Mr. McDonell to add to that.

Mr. Patrick McDonell: Thank you.

Mr. Turnbull, on a daily basis we had communication with staff and MPs who felt harassed coming through the crowds. Some had a lot of anxiety coming through the crowds. Some had their cars banged on and blocked when they were coming in through the Lyon-Wellington Street entrance into the parking lot. It was a daily thing at Lyon and Wellington.

One individual would block certain employees' cars every day. If it was a female employee, he would bang on their car before moving aside. We had one instance when, just before coming up the steps off Wellington, a female employee was accosted by a gentleman who tried to throw a bag of what appeared to be human feces on her. A male employee came to her rescue and pushed the assailant to the ground, and they left.

The Chair: Thank you for that.

Before we proceed to Madame Gaudreau, I will remind you—and I think Mr. Brookson put it really fittingly at the end of his comments, that he will try to share as much information as possible—that when it comes to security matters, often they are not taking place in this kind of forum, so we just need to be mindful of what witnesses can provide, and what we might be aware of versus what we can share.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Gaudreau, you have the floor.

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I thank our esteemed witnesses for being here.

On January 13, the former chief of police was officially warned of what was coming. You said earlier that you were warned around noon. Was it January 13 or later?

Mr. Patrick McDonell: Are you asking me if it was on January 13 that we were informed that the convoy was coming?

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: The former Ottawa police chief was officially briefed on the arrival of the convoy on Thursday, January 13. I wanted to know when you got the news.

Mr. Patrick McDonell: I knew about it on January 11.

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: I see.

When did the first gathering of the six command centre services take place? You were part of it, correct?

[*English*]

Mr. Larry Brookson: I'll respond through you, Madam Chair.

[*Translation*]

It was during the week prior to the convoy's arrival in Ottawa that we began to have discussions with our policing partners, including the Ottawa Police Service and the RCMP.

[*English*]

We started a few weeks prior in our preparation, but in the collaboration, we had a sense, even within the service, that this was going to be much bigger than us.

The knowledge of that many vehicles heading to Ottawa was extremely concerning to the service. The service really understands

the importance of this precinct and the business that gets conducted here. Those conversations on trying to increase that sensitivity and awareness began almost right away.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: As I understand it, communication was unfortunately lacking in an emergency situation. In addition, there is an isolation aspect which is unacceptable for our valuable witnesses, who are doing prevention and intervention.

We are also here to determine whether you would have more freedom to provide upstream services if the parliamentary precinct were expanded.

We were told that the police department knew about this on January 13, when on January 11, you were already aware of what was going to happen. Since there is a limit, and when you go beyond that limit, you cannot communicate or exercise certain powers, I find it difficult to tell my fellow citizens and my children that we are well protected.

We have offices on Sparks Street and there are administrative offices on Queen Street. Could the expansion of the parliamentary precinct help with prevention and security for parliamentarians?

● (1130)

[*English*]

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, the quick response is yes. It's hard to imagine somebody being responsible for a protective mandate when the largest artery that runs through their precinct is outside their control. They're left with the powers of attempting to influence others to make decisions that they're responsible for.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Mr. Brookson, what do you plan to do with the little power you have left at this time in terms of service delivery, considering what might happen on July 1?

You have learned many lessons. What can you say in public? Are you going to call on the other five or six services to say this is unacceptable and it can't happen again?

[*English*]

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, I think there have been lessons learned by everybody on what we had to go through last winter. I can tell you that I feel much more comfortable as to where the Ottawa Police Service is currently in its preparations for Canada Day. I'm very comfortable as to where the RCMP is. I'm very comfortable as to where the service is.

Right now, with respect to July 1, even with the fact that Wellington remains closed, at least I had significant influence with the City of Ottawa to make sure that it's tight. Certain barriers that have been there have not met my standards of protecting the triad. I'm concerned about sidewalks. I'm concerned about even a truck finding its way through. It's not acceptable. That's part of our operational plan, and it will be sealed extremely tightly.

Those are our preparations for July 1, but we understand that things change. Unfortunately, we're still a way out from July 1, and things can change, depending on the information we receive.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: However, I have a concern, Madam Chair.

In the last few testimonies, we were told about the events of 2014. I was not present in 2014, but lessons were learned during the last events. I would like to point out that I was indeed escorted at one point, as I did not feel safe, and I received excellent service.

That said, we were told that people could not know what they did not know, and could not predict what was coming. Who will be able to act, if not the police services? The protection service that we have access to in the parliamentary precinct already has its own responsibilities, and communications do not converge towards the same goal, because everyone respects their jurisdiction.

I dare to hope that what we are doing today will break down certain barriers, because, in the end, we are talking about human lives, the safety of people and elected officials. This is my cry from the heart today, because I would not want this to prevent people from entering politics in the coming years.

I would like to raise another point, Madam Chair.

I am very concerned about what is happening in social media. There is a lot of prevention that needs to be done, and I think the security services should be doing more than reporting, because we don't see all the thousands of messages that go through. You might agree with me that this is one more thing to consider in terms of what we've experienced in the last few months.

The Chair: Thank you very much for these comments and this discussion.

[*English*]

Would you like to reply?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, just quickly, I absolutely appreciate the comments. I'll just say that the relationship between the service and the Ottawa Police Service is extremely strong. The challenge I have is that once a member of Parliament steps off the sidewalk onto Wellington, I have no authority. In the past year or so my direction has been that it's irrelevant if we don't have authority—I'll deal with that after the fact—but we are to engage if any of our MPs find themselves in distress. What I'm asking for is to remove that barrier of risking the service outward. Thank you.

• (1135)

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Blaney, over to you.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

As always, through you, I want to thank both of the witnesses for being here today, and I respect how difficult it is to testify publicly on things that are so important to us. I appreciate all of your hard work on this.

If I could come to you first, Mr. Brookson, you talked earlier in one of your answers about the technical gap for knowing what was in the vehicles on Wellington. That was a gap; is it still a gap? If it isn't, where are we in the process of addressing that?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, I can tell you that work is already under way in collaboration with the parliamentary community, which has completely recognized the importance of looking beyond just the human assets to protect our parliamentarians. There need to be effective barriers and there also need to be sensing technologies, so that I get as much advance notice of when that threat is coming as possible.

Usually these threats that I'm most concerned about are threats that are coming in which the item of choice is not exposed—it's not out in the open. That work is ongoing, and I'm very happy with the progress that's happening there. Obviously it's not a small undertaking when we talk about something like that, so there will be more to come, I think, in the coming months to see about closing that gap.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: In testimony that I heard from the former chief of police here in Ottawa, one of the things that concerned me greatly as a member who walked through it every day was the fact that the whole street in front of Wellington was completely blocked. I asked why there was no attempt to block that street prior to the convoy's arriving. It seemed to me that the former chief of police felt that he did not have the information he needed to make that decision.

I'm just wondering if I could get any feedback on whether there was anything known here, and whether any communication happened between the two different facets of this.

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, this really speaks to the difference of sensitivity to what my environment is. To me, it's not just about security risks, it's about a potential disruption to democracy in this country. Again, my threshold is much lower as to what I would react to than some of our... I can't speak on behalf of the Ottawa Police Service or to what it knew and what decisions it took at that time.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: During the “freedom convoy”, what were the major areas of concern around security, and how would expanding the precinct help or hinder you in being able to do the work?

Mr. Larry Brookson: I would have full control of the precinct, which I don't have right now. However, I'm equally concerned about the Senate of Canada building, so that needs to be looked as well. I know the precinct was expanded a couple of years ago to include the sidewalk. From a security perspective the sidewalk doesn't give me much.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: What would largely change if the precinct expanded? It was interesting, again, as a member walking through it. I had a lot of arguments as I walked to work every day, which was not necessarily the best way to experience that, but I also saw a lot of people struggling. What I noted many times were people with mobility issues really having challenges getting through and trying to get places.

If we change this, if the precinct expands, how are we going to make sure that people are able to move through it comfortably? The other thing I'll add to it is that there's a lot of discussion about having a pedestrian mall or access to people being able to sell things right in front of the House and having maybe a tram go through. Are any of these being looked at and are there any security concerns that we should be considering in terms of our recommendations to the House?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, the security concern for me would be permitting any vehicle to come smack down the middle of our precinct. I would hope that the decision is not to somehow reopen Wellington Street in front of the triad and between blocks 2 and 1.

With respect to what would change, the POJ is still the POJ. The relationship that the service has with the Ottawa Police Service is stronger compared to three years ago, when I first arrived. It's extremely strong. They respond to our calls for service. The service has been built to hold the first 90 minutes of any sort of crisis. If I've picked up the phone, I've never received a no when I've asked for assistance from the RCMP or the Ottawa Police Service, or even the OPP during the occupation, with respect to one of their public order teams that was under our command.

We're looking to formalize those relationships with a series of MOUs. My concern in wanting to do that is that we can't just build these on pure relationships between the organizations, because those relationships can change. That's one gap that I'm moving to close.

Outside of having our officers have authority specifically on Wellington, hopefully on Sparks and part of Elgin, and a little bit more around the Senate of Canada building, nothing else is going to change.

• (1140)

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Another issue that's arisen through some testimony is the fact that sometimes indigenous communities want to come here to do sacred work. Sometimes they want to come here to protest an issue. There was a strong sense that how they were reacted to is very different from how other groups were reacted to.

I'm wondering whether there are any discussions internally—we don't need to know the details, but whether they are happening—around how to approach specific groups who may have a different

way of protesting that needs to be acknowledged, and recognizing that there may be some racism that we need to face in this place?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, one of the things I'm most proud of within the service is that, through our advanced planning and management unit and the outreach that we've built through appropriate training, we get out front on these specialized groups to make sure they have the ability to come to Parliament Hill.

The service expects to have an open and free environment for Parliament Hill. As much as our role is to ensure the security of those at work and who come here, it's also to ensure that democracy unfolds. The service is not in place to put up any barriers for any protest. We have the use of the Hill committee, which all of the parliamentary partners sit on. Applications are reviewed and demonstrations will continue to happen on Parliament Hill. Even with an expanded precinct, they will continue to happen.

The Chair: Thank you.

We don't have enough time to go through the whole second round, but we are going to start with Mr. McCauley.

Mr. McCauley, you'll have five minutes, and you have about 30 seconds on standby from Mr. Vis earlier. I will provide a bit of leniency, as I have to the other members. I figured Mr. Vis would want you to have them; otherwise he would have said.

We'll go to you for up to five minutes, through the chair.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): I'll get around to sharing time with you, Mr. Gerretsen. Don't worry.

Gentlemen, welcome. I appreciate your time today.

Through you, Madam Chair, to Mr. Brookson, was PPS aware of the city's plan to allow the protesters to set up on Wellington? My understanding is that the protesters were in contact with the city in advance, and the city said, "Well, set up here, here and here."

Was PPS part of that conversation?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, I was made aware of the plans that were put in place with respect to traffic and set-up.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Was that well in advance?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Yes, but the week before was when it was confirmed to me.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: The obvious question is, I assume you said no, or I assume you said, "What are you guys thinking?"

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, I raised concerns about having vehicles able to come up in front of the triad, but again, Wellington is not part of my authority. All I could do was have the discussions and raise those concerns with the partners, and ultimately the decision was taken to continue down that path and permit the—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Would you be able to share the Ottawa police's response to your concerns?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, no.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Okay.

Through you, Madam Chair, to Mr. Brookson, when do you think it went out of control, from a protest to an out-of-control, sit-down, locked-in, long-term protest?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): "Occupation" is the word you're looking for.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I don't interrupt you, Mr. Gerretsen. Please show the same respect.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I was being helpful.

An hon. member: You're never helpful.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: You're being childish. Show some respect, Mr. Gerretsen.

To you, Mr. Brookson.

The Chair: Direct comments through the chair.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: That's through the chair, thanks.

Mr. Larry Brookson: It was the sheer numbers that were on track to be en route and travelling, understanding that at any point in time in that travel to the city of Ottawa, it could disband, stop or return. As the numbers started to become a reality on the Friday, it was clear this was going to go beyond the weekend.

• (1145)

Mr. Kelly McCauley: You mentioned Wellington, which is the main artery, being out of your control. In your mind and that of the PPS, what would be needed? Is it just shutting down Wellington? Is it shutting down other streets? Where along Wellington would it stop?

We have the Confed, the "Mighty Confed", as I call it. The Supreme Court is just down there, and other offices are further down the road. What areas would be needed, in PPS's perfect world, for the control that you commented on?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, obviously it would be Wellington Street and Sparks. We would be looking at down to Kent and then on the west side of the war memorial. There still needs to be an analysis and assessment of the Senate of Canada building.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Through you, Madam Chair, have you had these talks with the Ottawa police? Do they concur, or is their opinion that it should be left open?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, I don't enter into those levels of discussion with the Ottawa Police Service. Ultimately, it's not a police decision or—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: You have referred to a collaborative approach. Are there discussions to get their feedback? Is PPS required to wait until we make a decision further down the road?

I'd hate for this committee and the government to be making decisions when you haven't even engaged with Ottawa police yet, or the RCMP for that matter.

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, my responsibility is to direct the service with what I have in front of me, Mr. McCauley. That's where I am.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: That's fair.

What number of added officers would you need in PPS if we had the expanded precinct, as proposed?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, at this point in time I don't have the numbers on that, Mr. McCauley. That would be a requirement of that assessment. We talked about the effective barriers. It's not just about throwing human assets at this to deliver the mandate.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Madam Chair, I have just one last question.

You talked earlier about threats daily, including one person travelling down Lyon and across Wellington and having their car banged on every day. I have to ask, where is the PPS? Where are the police? If this is happening every day, as has been stated, why isn't someone contacting the police for help?

One time I could see, but if it's happening every day.... I'm flabbergasted that it would be allowed to continue, if it did.

Mr. Patrick McDonell: I was also flabbergasted. It happened on Wellington Street. It wasn't in the PPS area of jurisdiction, through you, Madam Chair. It was in the Ottawa police jurisdiction and—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Are you aware of whether it was reported to the police?

Mr. Patrick McDonell: It was done every day and the police car was within viewing distance. We voiced our frustration with what was happening. It was almost a daily occurrence.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: What was the police's reaction? Did they say it was not a big deal? Did they claim it didn't happen, or...?

Mr. Patrick McDonell: I can't comment on that. I wasn't there.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Thanks.

The Chair: Mr. Brookson, do you have anything to add?

Mr. Larry Brookson: I have nothing more, Madam Chair. Thank you.

The Chair: Excellent.

That will bring us to getting ready to vote. I think that's a good segue into that.

We'll return with Mr. Fergus, followed by Madame Gaudreau and Ms. Blaney. I'll provide more names as I get them.

Thank you.

Safe travels to your vote.

• (1145) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1220)

The Chair: Welcome back to PROC.

We will continue with the second round, and five minutes goes to Mr. Ferguson.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Greg Ferguson (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

I'd like to thank the witnesses here. I'm going to ask four pretty quick questions, and I'd like to share my time, if it's possible, with my colleague, Mr. Gerretsen.

First of all, Mr. Brookson, I'd just like to go back to a question that you were asked by Mr. Vis. He asked you if the PPS requested the Emergencies Act.

Can I ask a more fulsome question? Would any police force ask for an act to be invoked, or would they identify the tools that they need for their operational challenges and leave it to the elected officials to find the best tools available? Which would better describe the situation?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, Mr. Ferguson, I appreciate the question, but I can't speak on behalf of law enforcement as to what tools they think they would need when dealing with any sort of police matter.

Hon. Greg Ferguson: Okay, so on that front, then, because you answered the question, I just wanted to know if there was any more nuance to the answer to that question.

Mr. Larry Brookson: Well, the only extra nuance, through you, Madam Chair, would be that there was no benefit whatsoever in the invocation of the Emergencies Act for the service. There were no additional powers provided through that, again, simply because we're not a policing organization.

Hon. Greg Ferguson: That's what I wanted to get at: The PPS is not a policing organization—

Mr. Larry Brookson: Correct.

Hon. Greg Ferguson: —which then leads me to my second question. In terms of testimony we heard earlier, I've been around this place for a number of years, through you, Madam Chair. I've seen what has happened—the incident of the hijacking of a bus, and we saw what happened in October 2014—and, after every incident, it would be my sense that we respond with a very incremental type of approach.

Have we reached the point, after February's occupation, that we should respond with an incremental approach, or should we try to go for more wholesale changes, with a larger way of looking forward?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, if I understand your question correctly, Mr. Ferguson, obviously the assessment analysis as to what exactly that needs to be is, I think, to come. I'm waiting for some of that work to be completed.

Again, one of the authorities that I have is shutting down the precinct when that threat level reaches a threshold that I'm no longer comfortable with. That's not something I rely on partners or anybody else to influence me on or to suggest otherwise. I apologize, because I don't think that has answered your question.

Hon. Greg Ferguson: The approach I was trying to take was to try to say that in previous times, we've always just tried to take a very incremental approach to improving security around the Hill. Is this the time for incremental thinking, or should we be thinking beyond what happened in the past and start thinking about what could be coming down the pipe in the years to come?

• (1225)

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, I can't deliver a mandate if I'm on a linear path to anything, and I ensure that the response is there to meet the threat when it appears. We're talking about a different realm in terms of a pure threat to Parliament, so it's tough for me to suggest how else I would be able to increment stuff up, when I know what I'm here to protect.

Hon. Greg Ferguson: On that front, in terms of the resources that you and Mr. McDonnell would need to make sure that you could protect Canadians in general and parliamentarians in particular, and their staff, would you be seeking only human resources, or does security go beyond that? Would it include infrastructure, human resources, and other matters that I maybe can't imagine right now that would be necessary for you to do your job well?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, to Mr. Ferguson, yes. I've indicated previously and in my opening remarks that the solution to this is not hardening strategy. It is important in providing a security fabric over the precinct, but that alone is not going to get us to where we need to be. The same can be said for just throwing human and security assets at it. That's not going to get us to where we need to be.

In order for us to be effective, and for me to get somewhat more comfortable about where the precinct is, we need the inclusion of effective barriers and technology to ensure that situational awareness.

Hon. Greg Ferguson: Thank you.

I'm sorry to have taken up so much time.

The Chair: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Gaudreau, you have the floor for two and a half minutes

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Thank you, Madam Chair.

We were just talking about efficiency. Let's imagine that we don't have to worry about human resources, which are a scarce commodity, and that we have a sufficient perimeter to ensure security. How far can we go in terms of the needs that parliamentarians may have? This is a subject we have already discussed. A lot of people have second homes that are a few kilometres away, obviously.

First of all, I talked earlier about what could be done, as a preventive measure, regarding possible reports. It's not necessarily about an armed person on Wellington Street. There may be people announcing their arrival, correct, Madam Chair?

I'd like to know what you're missing and what additional expertise you would need to fill those gaps.

[English]

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, this is where it's critically important that the service has the partners that it has. We talk about being an intelligence-led organization in order to serve the parliamentary community, and that's not going to change moving forward. The advance notice we receive through intelligence and information that we receive gives us ample time to assess and analyze. The service will spare no expense in responding effectively to ensure the safety of parliamentary staffers and members of the public while they're on the precinct.

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Given what we are seeing, whether in the U.S. Congress or elsewhere, and the serious situation we could have experienced last weekend, I would like to know if you have everything you need to be able to respond.

We are here to try to do what we need to do to avoid situations where we learn from our mistakes, or new situations. In fact, situations are always new.

[English]

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, I'm extremely comfortable and pleased with the discussions that are currently under way with the parliamentary community on finding some other.... It can't be dealt with from a single lane. This is a multi-faceted approach to increasing the security of the precinct and parliamentarians.

I'm extremely comfortable. I'm very well supported by both Speakers and by my counterparts at both corporate security directorates. Those discussions have already been initiated, and I'm quite pleased with the progress to date and where they are going.

• (1230)

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Gaudreau.

[English]

Madam Blaney.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Madam Chair, as always, through you, I would like to ask one question of both witnesses. I'll leave them to decide who is best to answer it.

We've increasingly seen articles about a summer convoy visit, which is concerning, of course. We have some pretty important days, like Canada Day, coming up.

I'm wondering if we are prepared for that. Are there any major concerns? What lessons were learned from the previous convoy that prepare this place for the summer one?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, as the teams make preparations.... I've received two briefings. There will be a briefing tomorrow afternoon for the parliamentary community, to bring them through our preparations for securing the precinct for July 1.

I apologize. I'm not going to get into the details of the specifics of the security concerns, if there are any, for the July 1 festivities. However, I can tell you that I'm extremely comfortable with just the fact that Wellington is shut down. We'll make the necessary efforts to make sure it is completely sealed off for those festivities.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: This is my last question, since I have time for another one.

We heard in Chief Jocko's testimony that there was very serious concern, from her perspective, about how the convoy was treated—in terms of their behaviour, their outright plans to overtake the government, and all the things they said—compared to how indigenous folks have been treated when they are protesting and doing things that are, of course, in no way as disruptive as the convoy.

I asked a question earlier about what the plan is. Could you please inform us what the process is to make sure we're working with indigenous people respectfully? Who is part of that consultation? Who is part of gathering the information? How does that relationship work, and is it ongoing or a one-time thing?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, I think it's important to note what today is. It is National Indigenous Peoples Day.

Again, I go back to our plenary unit, which does an amazing level of outreach. Ms. Blaney, I can assure you that when our indigenous family members are coming to the precinct to protest or have access, we get out front to make sure it's facilitated and as easy as possible, so there are no barriers.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: What is the complaint process? Is there a specific complaint process for indigenous people who feel they are treated differently and want to come forward? We're hearing it again and again, but I'm hearing responses about how this is not the case. That difference in opinion concerns me.

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, if there are complaints from anybody—indigenous family members or others—it's critically important that those complaints come to the office of the director of the service, so they can be dealt with as swiftly as possible.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll now go to Mrs. Block, followed by Mr. Gerretsen.

Go ahead, Mrs. Block.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I want to thank our witnesses for joining us today.

I will say, at the front end of my comments, that, having been a member of Parliament for almost 14 years, I have always appreciated the work the PPS does in the precinct, the very respectful support they provide to members of Parliament, and the work of our Sergeant-at-Arms.

I want to start with my experience during the convoy, as other members of Parliament have. I walked from the Hill or my office to my apartment, which is downtown, every day and did not experience what others have stated they did, although I did not engage with the protesters on a daily basis. I did not have arguments with them. Perhaps that is why my experience was somewhat different.

I also recall we were encouraged to call PPS when we were coming from our office to the Hill. I believe I did that for the first or second day. After I realized that my trip between my office and the Hill was going to be unfettered and that I had no reason to be afraid, I no longer called the PPS to advise them I was heading to the Hill.

Mr. Brookson, in Chief Sloly's testimony earlier in this study, he used the word "unforeseen". You yourself stated here today that the numbers that started showing up on the Friday made it clear this was going to go longer than the weekend.

I want to confirm what I heard in response to Ms. Gaudreau's comments: If you were alerted on January 11, and the Ottawa Police Service was alerted on January 13, that this convoy was coming, and if you were able to watch on television—as I and probably many Canadians did—as the convoy proceeded to Ottawa and crowds gathered to encourage them, why did it take almost two weeks for you to sit down with other law enforcement agencies and develop a plan?

• (1235)

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, again, the occupation outside of the precinct was the responsibility of the POJ lead. In fairness to Mr. Sloly's testimony, it's important to note that the sheer number of vehicles that were en route to Ottawa provided a small snippet of what the future was to hold with their arrival.

I don't think anybody was able to forecast that it would go into a full month, or some of the occurrences that happened during that period. Again, I need to remind you that I'm not a policing service.

When those operational plans were being worked up, yes, I always needed to know what the context was for the service, but it was in the realm of the policing organizations to come up with the

operational plan to effectively deal with the individuals who were on Wellington Street and on the outskirts.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Thank you very much.

Again, Mr. Brookson, in response to a question earlier today, when my colleague asked if an expanded physical jurisdiction for the PPS with the same legal mandate would be a feasible undertaking, you responded, "Yes."

In his testimony, former chief Sloly made the comment that it was one thing to be able to redraw boundaries but quite another to work out the jurisdictional issues that would come with that. You yourself have testified that you have no mandate for Criminal Code investigations and that you are not a policing organization.

If the precinct is to extend well beyond Wellington, and we have to weigh the value of having effective barriers, sensing technologies and the other things you said you believed were needed, and balance that with an open and free environment, what kinds of human resources is it going to take to ensure that the kind of protection we have on the Hill will be at the same level when we are walking on Slater, Queen or Albert?

Thank you.

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, again, there will always be an element of an MP being off the precinct, so the facilitation of where the precinct is being proposed to be.... As I indicated earlier, the assessment and analysis haven't been completed as to what investment is going to be required into this service to ensure that. I would expect that to be coming following whatever decisions are being taken.

It's also important, though, to note that we can't just speak about one element. Again, the question specific to increasing human resourcing is something that will most likely be necessary, but there's also the requirement of the effective barriers and technology.... I need to have an increased situational awareness of what the precinct has underneath it.

• (1240)

Mrs. Kelly Block: Thank you very much for that.

The Chair: Did you have any closing comments? Do you have a quick question, or are you okay?

Mrs. Kelly Block: Is my time up?

The Chair: I've been lenient with others, so I don't mind giving you one more if you want it.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Thank you, Madam Chair. Through you, very quickly, what are some of the lessons learned? We've heard from witnesses that many lessons have been learned, but give us just one or two.

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, the after action review is still ongoing within the service. I'm not comfortable speaking in the open to what some of those key lessons learned were, but down the road, whether it's in camera or whatever, I'd be more than willing to come back and express some of those lessons.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Excellent. Thank you.

Now we'll go to Mr. Gerretsen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Through you to the witnesses, I'm just looking for yes or no answers to my questions, if you find you can sufficiently answer with a yes or no. I'll try to be as quick as I can, so I can share my time with Mr. Turnbull.

On Thursday, February 17, the Parliamentary Protective Service erected an eight-foot-high construction fence along Wellington Street as part of the police operations that were being planned. Has that ever happened in the past? I'm wondering if Mr. Brookson knows.

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair to Mr. Gerretsen, I appreciate your question.

I want to be clear that the decision to increase that fence site was not part of the policing response. It was—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Sure, but it was on parliamentary property. I'm just curious if you're aware of whether or not it had ever happened in the past.

Mr. Larry Brookson: It had not, that I'm aware of.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: You're not aware of that.

On Friday, February 18, after a consultation with the Parliamentary Protective Service, as per the press release I'm looking at, the Speaker of the House of Commons and the leaders of the parties agreed to suspend the sitting day for Parliament, effectively postponing or putting on pause democracy in our country.

Are you aware of any other time in the past when our democratic institution has not been able to function, based on the advice of security?

Mr. Larry Brookson: February 14, 2014.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: What was that incident?

Mr. Larry Brookson: That was the shooting incident.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: That was the shooting incident on Parliament.

Mr. Larry Brookson: It was October. I'm sorry.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Finally, on Saturday, February 19—this is when the parliamentary precinct was in a hold and secure—I was entering the parliamentary precinct. I was literally walking through the police exercise that was going on to remove the occupiers.

At the end of Bank Street, I attempted to enter. There were about 15 PPS individuals who were standing at what was a makeshift opening in the gate, literally moving two construction fences. They were using a fairly heavy-gauge metal chain to chain that fence to-

gether with a padlock. That's how I entered into the parliamentary precinct to participate in the democratic process that we have here.

Are you aware of any other time in the past that such high security measures were used to protect the parliamentary precinct and the individuals who work here?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, no, Mr. Gerretsen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Thank you.

Mr. Turnbull.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: We heard from Minister Tassi, who came before this committee. She talked about block 2. She said that 50% of parliamentarians in the future will actually work south of Wellington.

We also heard from Senator Vernon White, who is a former Ottawa police chief, and another former Ottawa police chief, Peter Sloly, who said in his opening remarks: "First is crime prevention through environmental design. Consider changes to the parliamentary precinct's physical environment, including the boundaries, to improve security."

What I want to double-check here is that in order to optimize security, does it make sense to have a major arterial road, with cars running along it all day long, through the middle of the future parliamentary precinct?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, I have indicated a few times that that's not supported by the service. No.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Great.

I think it was Senator White who said that the biggest gain in MP security would be to shut down Wellington Street.

Would you agree with that sentiment, from an environmental design perspective?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, I would.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Thank you.

I also want to ask about response times.

When critical incidents happen along Wellington Street currently, who is in the best position to respond? I wanted to check with you, but I assume it's PPS, because you're closer and perhaps have that situational awareness.

• (1245)

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, it would be the service, Mr. Turnbull.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Thank you.

In the future, if we wanted to guarantee PPS's response time.... I realize in your earlier testimony you said that in fact you're in a difficult position, that it's difficult to influence decisions on something you really don't have a mandate over. That must make it very challenging to do your job, which is to secure the parliamentary precinct.

In terms of guaranteeing a faster response time in the future, can we improve that, and what resources would you need?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, again, the analysis and assessment would need to be completed on what would be the investment for an expanded precinct.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Thank you.

Is that process under way?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, it is, and it wouldn't be something that I'd be permitted to discuss in open camera.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thank you. This a great committee to be on.

Basically, in the interests of time, we're going to go through a quick round of giving everyone some time. I will give the Conservatives about three minutes, and Liberals will get about three minutes.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Gaudreau, you will have the floor for one minute.

[*English*]

Ms. Blaney, I'll give you about a minute to a minute and a half as well.

We'll get quick questions back and forth, and then we will call it a day.

We'll start with Mr. McCauley.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Thanks, Madam Chair.

I want to compliment both our witnesses for their straightforward answers.

Through you, Madam Chair, Mr. Brookson, I want to get back to having control of Wellington and Sparks. If we expanded the precinct and shut down Sparks, and PPS was looking after Sparks, so to speak, how would that interact with the Ottawa police for the actual policing of Sparks? Walk me through a Coles Notes version of how that would look.

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, it would function the same way it does now. As an example, if one of our protection officers picked up on certain behaviour that was deemed a concern or a threat, and it led to a subsequent arrest or detainment by the protection officer, the call goes in through our OSC to the OSC of the Ottawa police, and a priority three call response is provided, because that is the limitation of 494(1) in the Criminal Code. It provides us public officer arrests, but we can't release, so that's done with Ottawa police. That partnership is working extremely well, and that wouldn't change.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: If you were looking at things through Pareto's law of averages of 80% coming from 20%, what would be the 80%? Would it be shutting down Wellington and Sparks that would have the greatest impact, in your mind, for security?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair. Mr. McCauley, it would be the exact geography we spoke about previously. The Senate of Canada building is still a concern for me at its current location, so that needs to be considered for precinct expansion. Then the north side of Wellington, understanding where the Langevin building comes around, needs to be taken under consideration as far down as Kent.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Would you close Wellington to OC Transpo or to regular bus service as well?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, that is correct; it would be completely closed off.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Thanks, Madam Chair.

Thank you again, gentlemen.

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Turnbull.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: I want to ask for a little more information around the formalizing of relationships, keeping in mind that, of course, there's only so much you can share in a public meeting.

I'm wondering, with your tabletop exercises and critical incident response and looking at them from a very collaborative perspective.... We've heard testimony from numerous security experts who have said that the clearer the roles, relationships and lines of communication are within any critical incident.... It's imperative to have the best possible, the quickest possible and the most effective response.

Could you give us any more information as to the MOUs, what that process looks like and whether you can give us any other details on how you're working through those multi-jurisdictional...? I don't want to call them challenges, but I'm sure that there are multi-jurisdictional relationships that have to be clarified.

● (1250)

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, it's the tabletop exercising that is another element within the service that I'm extremely proud of, and that exercising framework is led by the service. The involvement we've had with both our key partners, the RCMP and the Ottawa Police Service, has been phenomenal with their participation and guidance, even the sharing of specific training for the service has been equally....

I apologize, Mr. Turnbull. I'm going to ask you to bring me back to point on this.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Yes. That's no problem. I'll ask you a quick clarifying question. Where I was going with this is that it's clear to me, based on your testimony today, that those conversations are under way and there's lots of clarification being done.

What I wanted to get to was asking you a very clear question: In terms of the parliamentary precinct, if PPS really has the mandate to protect members of Parliament and their staff in order for our democracy to continue to function, it seems to me—and I want to see if you agree with this—that PPS really should be the lead in terms of organizing and at the top of the chain. It really should be PPS. Would you agree with that, if we were to optimize MP security?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Through you, Madam Chair, when it comes to within the precinct, Mr. Turnbull, yes, I would agree with that.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Excellent.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Gaudreau, you have the floor.

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: I have one minute.

I really need to focus.

Thank you very much for being here.

I am thinking about it and I see that an initiative has been launched by the Parliamentary Protective Service and I thank them for that.

That said, when you have a crisis to deal with, you have to adjust your aim and redo the command post. I would hope that when we receive the documents on the recommendations, perhaps at a closed meeting, there may be proposals for some kind of command post to adjust to the situation. Human beings do not want to encroach on jurisdictions and cross boundaries.

I would like to hear from witnesses about having a system in place already.

You have experience in preventing incidents that could occur at any time.

[*English*]

Mr. Larry Brookson: The service has a critical management centre, and it was up and running throughout the past winter. It was up and running for last Saturday.

This is a centre that really has diffusion of the tactical leadership of the service in applying an effective response to any threat that can happen on the Hill.

Our command centre is also in line with....

[*Translation*]

I'm sorry, I don't think I understood that.

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: I'm going to take 30 seconds to go over what I said.

Madam Chair, how are we to explain all the delays there were last February if the system was already in place?

[*English*]

Mr. Larry Brookson: The delays I believe the honourable member is speaking about would be more towards the police force of ju-

risdiction and coming up with the operational policing response. That did not fall to the service to provide.

I apologize. I think that's where my confusion stems from.

The Chair: Excellent. Thank you for that clarification.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Ms. Blaney.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I've noticed in the last few weeks that I'm seeing an increase of vehicles driving between the blocks, and I don't think that they're parliamentary vehicles.

I guess my first question is this: Are there any preliminary plans about, if the precinct grows, how those will be blocked off in a safe way that makes sense and is accessible, of course? We're still probably going to have the buses moving through the precinct. That's one part.

The other question that I have is this: Is there any information or are there any numbers on what that would mean for staffing? Would we need to increase—and by how much—with the precinct growing?

Mr. Larry Brookson: Ms. Blaney, are you talking about the increase in the service's resourcing?

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Yes, for staffing. If the precinct grows, I would assume that you are going to need more people doing the work that needs to be done. I'm curious about whether there's been any work on what that expansion would look like.

● (1255)

Mr. Larry Brookson: Those discussions are currently... That assessment still needs to be done, depending on what the precinct's going to look like in the end. With respect to the increased traffic, obviously there's maintenance that continues to take place, so there is a requirement for some vehicular access to Wellington Street. It's still not under my control, Wellington Street. I think the city has some access still. There's emergency access, obviously. The one priority is that our parliamentary buses have access to it.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Thank you.

The Chair: Excellent.

I think all members will agree, and I think they've all definitely shared, that we really appreciate your taking the time to come back to this committee and make yourselves available. We really appreciate all the work and service you provide.

With that, thank you for your time and attention today. We hope you keep well and safe. If there's anything else you want the committee to consider, please do not hesitate to share that with the clerk, and we will make sure members have it to look through. Please keep well and safe.

Mr. Larry Brookson: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: In closing, as we wrap up, I'm going to do a bit of quick housekeeping.

As I refer to items that are outstanding, we have the parking lot document that the analysts and clerk are working on, which should be coming out to all members within the next few weeks.

The summary of testimony or evidence, which we will make sure incorporates what we heard today, is currently at translation. They will embed what's been heard today. We'll have that out to all members within the next few weeks to a month, once it is available in both official languages.

Based on where we are right now, I think we're at a good spot, so I do not believe that a meeting on Thursday is necessary. I'll just make it official that we will not have a meeting on Thursday.

In closing, on behalf of everyone, I think it's important that we take time to thank Justin. The clerk has done a fabulous job—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Chair:—as have the analysts and interpreters. I also want to give a quick shout-out to the multimedia services team, known as the MMS team; the proceedings and verification officer, the PVO; and the broadcast people, who have allowed us to continue functioning; as well as to catering and the cleaning crews.

Last, but not least, I know the House leaders all work really well together to be able to give us time to meet. The whips, I would like to say, have done a good job at picking members for this committee, whom I have really enjoyed working with.

Also, to our team members, we know how much you—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: And the deputy whips. Isn't Sherry your deputy whip?

The Chair: Who is?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: I was going to say to mention the deputy whips as well.

The Chair: Oh, yes.

We would not be able to do it without the team members who are all on our team, and definitely the deputy whips and the deputy House leaders. They are instrumental to the progress we've made.

Both reports were presented today. With that, I hope everyone keeps well and safe.

Try not to be in touch until the fall.

We'll see you soon. Thank you.

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