



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

---

# Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

EVIDENCE

**NUMBER 133**

Tuesday, December 3, 2024

---

Chair: Mr. Iqwinder Gaheer





## Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

Tuesday, December 3, 2024

• (1100)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Iqwinder Gaheer (Mississauga—Malton, Lib.)):** I call this meeting to order.

I ask that the media please stop recording. Thank you.

Welcome to meeting number 133 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format.

I'd like to remind participants of the following points.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. All comments should be addressed through the chair. Members, please raise your hand if you wish to speak, whether participating in person or via Zoom. The clerk and I will manage the speaking order as best we can.

Before we move on to the supplementary estimates, I have two matters regarding draft budgets that I quickly want to dispose of for the members.

We know that the clerk has distributed two draft budgets. One is from last week, for our study on Indian interference, totalling \$21,250, and another is from yesterday, for our current meeting on supplementary estimates (B), amounting to \$500. Are there any questions or comments?

Is it the will of the committee to adopt both budgets?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

The second matter is on our draft report on the growing problem of car thefts in Canada. The clerk distributed on Thursday, November 28, the new recommendation 42, which was prepared by the analysts following our in camera meeting on Tuesday, November 26. Are there any questions or comments?

Is it the will of the committee to adopt recommendation 42?

Go ahead, Madame Michaud.

[Translation]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank the analysts for their work on this recommendation.

As far as I'm concerned, I don't think it's in keeping with the spirit of what the Conservatives were originally looking for with these recommendations. These recommendations have a lot to do with provincial and Quebec jurisdiction. For the Bloc Québécois, it will be difficult to adopt or accept them.

I don't know what the other parties think, but, for my part, I won't be able to vote in favour of these recommendations.

[English]

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Ms. Dancho.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** I think we can take this conversation off-line and perhaps address it at another time.

**The Chair:** Okay. We will come back to the draft report, seeing as there might be debate on it. We'll go on to today's meeting.

Pursuant to the order of reference of November 18, 2024, the committee begins its study of supplementary estimates (B), 2024-25.

I would like to welcome our witnesses for both hours.

From the Canada Border Services Agency, we have Erin O'Gorman, president, and Ryan Pilgrim, chief financial officer.

We have, from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, Daniel Rogers, director, and Jérôme Laliberté, chief financial officer and deputy director of administration.

From the Correctional Service of Canada, we have Anne Kelly, commissioner; France Gratton, acting senior deputy commissioner; and Tony Matson, assistant commissioner and chief financial officer, corporate services.

From the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, we have Tricia Geddes, deputy minister, and Patrick Amyot, assistant deputy minister and chief financial officer.

From the Parole Board of Canada, we have Joanne Blanchard, chairperson, and Claudine Legault, chief financial officer.

From the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, we have Michael Duheme, commissioner, and Samantha Hazen, chief financial officer.

Please note that Minister LeBlanc will join the officials for the second hour.

I understand that the Department of Public Safety, the RCMP and the CBSA have prepared opening statements.

I now invite Ms. Geddes to make an opening statement of up to five minutes.

Thank you.

• (1105)

**Ms. Tricia Geddes (Deputy Minister, Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness):** Good morning, Mr. Chair. Thank you very much.

Good morning, committee members.

Thank you for inviting me to speak today about the supplementary estimates (B) for Public Safety Canada.

As many of you know, we are a very busy department that supports not only a number of agencies, but also our own programs. Our mandate touches on borders, human and drug trafficking, corrections, national security and emergency preparedness, among others.

[Translation]

While my colleagues will be talking about their organization's budget, I will be talking about the budget for programs and activities that fall within the mandate of the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness. The funding we are requesting today will enable our department to continue its vital work on the issues that matter most to Canadians.

[English]

I'll just give you a few examples.

Today we are seeking \$45.8 million for Public Safety Canada and the Canada Border Services Agency to continue to combat auto theft. While the numbers in early 2024 showed a decrease of 17% in the number of auto thefts compared to the previous year, we know that criminal networks quickly adapt and that we must be prepared.

[Translation]

We are also seeking additional funding to make significant investments in policing strategies, border control and community gang prevention. Our goal is to reduce the number of firearms entering our communities, and the number of gun crimes committed in our highest-risk communities.

[English]

Another way we are working to keep our communities safer is through Canada's first-ever action plan on combatting hate. The action plan includes the Canada community security program. This program replaces the security infrastructure program and provides time-limited funding to private not-for-profit organizations that are at risk of experiencing hate-motivated crime.

Eligible recipients include places of worship, provincially and territorially recognized private educational institutions, shelters for victims of gender-based violence, community centres, cemeteries, child care centres, and office and administrative spaces. The \$14.9 million in budgetary expenditures will allow us to continue this work, which has become so crucial, particularly in the face of hate crime that has increased due to geopolitical tensions.

Our portfolio also includes emergency preparedness and management. One key component of that work is disaster financial assistance arrangements. These arrangements allow us to provide financial assistance to provinces and territories in the event of large-scale natural disasters, as we did this summer for Yukon flooding and last winter following significant snowstorms in Nova Scotia. This program will continue to be crucial as we see an ever-increasing number of extreme weather events. To that end, we are seeking to reprofile \$800 million from a previous year.

Mr. Chair and committee members, these are just a few examples, but I once again want to thank you for inviting me to speak about and underscore the importance of funding to help fulfill Public Safety Canada's mandate of keeping Canada secure for all.

[Translation]

Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** I now invite Commissioner Duheme to make an opening statement of up to five minutes.

**Commissioner Michael Duheme (Commissioner, Royal Canadian Mounted Police):** Good morning, Mr. Chair.

Honourable committee members, thank you for providing me with the opportunity to speak to you today about the RCMP's supplementary estimates (B) for the 2024-25 fiscal year. I'm here with Sam Hazen, our chief financial officer.

I'll provide some background on the RCMP and our financial structure, which will help to situate today's discussion on the supplementary estimates (B).

[Translation]

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, or RCMP, is Canada's national police force. It is a complex organization, involved in law enforcement at the community, provincial, territorial and federal levels. It also fulfils international obligations, such as peace missions and building relationships with overseas partners, including the Group of Five in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand.

The RCMP has approximately 32,000 employees, two-thirds of whom are sworn police officers; the other third are non-sworn civilian members and public servants. These employees provide front-line policing services under 165 contracts with provincial, territorial and municipal governments, as well as in 600 indigenous communities across Canada.

• (1110)

[English]

We are responsible for addressing increasingly serious and complex criminal threats in Canada in areas such as terrorism and extremism, drugs and organized crime, national security, protective policing and border integrity.

As you are aware, border integrity has been top of mind in recent weeks, and I want to assure members of this committee that we continue to work with our portfolio and law enforcement partners across the country, as well as south of the border, to ensure that we are prepared to address any border concerns.

[Translation]

The RCMP also provides its law enforcement partners with specialized operational policing services, including advanced training, weapons licensing and investigative and forensic services.

I would like to emphasize that the work being done at the RCMP in 2024 has built on the significant progress already made in modernizing policing to respond to the ever-changing threats and to transform the culture of the organization in ways that build trust. This means constantly finding ways to take better care of our employees, to treat all our customers with dignity and respect, and to do our policing in ways that inspire ever greater trust.

[English]

Real and sustained change takes time, and we know that there's more work to do.

Through the 2024-25 supplementary estimates (B), the RCMP expects to access \$721 million, mainly attributed to the following: \$440 million for the contract policing program to address growth in the contract policing program, enabling the continuance of program delivery; \$45.4 million in advanced funding, as Canada assumes the presidency of the G7 in 2025, to undertake site visits, initiate security planning and coordination, and begin advanced procurement of security equipment; \$26 million in support of providing protective services to public figures; \$16 million to support foreign interference-related criminal investigations; \$7.6 million to continue implementing activities in support of Canada's migrant smuggling prevention strategy; and \$2.4 million to support Canada's continued response to the security crisis in Haiti.

With that, I would like to again thank the committee for the opportunity to meet with you. I'm pleased to take any questions you may have.

Thank you.

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

I now invite Ms. O'Gorman to make an opening statement of up to five minutes.

[Translation]

**Ms. Erin O'Gorman (President, Canada Border Services Agency):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd also like to describe the funding that has been provided for the Canada Border Services Agency, or CBSA, in these supplementary estimates.

[English]

As part of a 2021 commitment to recapitalize port infrastructure, the CBSA received approval to build up to 24 new land ports of entry with a budget of \$481 million.

[Translation]

These investments will enhance the experience of travellers crossing the border, provide border services officers with improved infrastructure and technology, and support security. The CBSA is receiving \$23.1 million in these supplementary estimates (B) to complete planning and begin construction at the Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle port of entry.

[English]

Thus far, we have completed port of entry infrastructure improvements in Fraser, British Columbia; Bloomfield, New Brunswick; and Ste-Aurélie, Quebec.

[Translation]

Work is underway at two other ports of entry, Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle and Wild Horse.

[English]

The government's national action plan on combatting auto theft outlines steps that we are taking to disrupt, dismantle and prosecute organized crime. It builds on the successes and collaborative efforts with our provincial, territorial, municipal and industry partners, following the national summit on combatting auto theft held last February.

[Translation]

The first quarterly update of the action plan was published on October 16.

[English]

To date, in 2024, the CBSA has intercepted more than 2,100 stolen vehicles, which already surpasses last year's total of 1,806.

[Translation]

We work closely with the appropriate police department, coordinate our efforts, conduct joint operations and share information within intelligence groups.

[English]

The \$30.8 million in supplementary estimates includes funding to enhance our intelligence capacity, put border service officers at the rail yards in the greater Toronto area, increase the number of export exams we undertake and assess new technologies, among other things.

Finally, the CBSA is accessing \$2.1 million for a market watch unit for trade remedy measures. With this funding, the CBSA will regularly update normal values to make sure that duties accurately reflect current levels of dumping.

• (1115)

[*Translation*]

These are the highlights of the supplementary estimates for the CBSA.

Thank you for your attention.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I now open the floor up to questions. It's the first round.

We'll begin with Ms. Dancho for six minutes.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to all the officials for being here. It's nice to see you all. Certainly we have issues in our country that concern every single one of you, and we appreciate your hard work.

Top of mind has been the threat of a 25% tariff from President-elect Donald Trump and its impact. That is certainly related to border security.

I would like to speak with Ms. O'Gorman regarding her department and the challenges that she is facing, in particular in between ports of entry.

Ms. O'Gorman, what efforts have you made in the last week to ensure there's more surveillance beyond the ports of entry themselves?

**Ms. Erin O'Gorman:** I can happily speak to the efforts of the CBSA when it comes to port security. I'll say a few words and then defer to my colleague, the commissioner of the RCMP, who has the mandate between the ports.

We work closely every day with our U.S. counterparts in terms of securing our shared border. We exchange information with them. Operationally, we are embedded in their targeting centres and we are awaiting an embedded officer from the CBP to come and join our targeting centre in the near future.

We speak regularly at the head of agency level, but, more importantly, every day at the officer level. I have recently, probably a year ago now, appointed an executive director operational officer responsible for combatting firearms, and a separate executive director responsible for combatting opioids.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** The union president of the Customs and Immigration Union mentioned some of the frustrations of our front-line officers for policing the border. He said:

The situation is so silly now that if our officers are sitting at one of their work-places and they see someone crossing just off to where the port is, we have to call the RCMP.

It seems there is frustration with our border officers. If they are literally seeing individuals crossing right out of their jurisdiction, they can't apprehend them. Can you comment on those challenges?

**Ms. Erin O'Gorman:** Sure.

I will say that this has never been raised to my attention. This was new information to me when I read it in the paper.

As we meet with our officers at land and air ports of entry and marine ports, we often talk about the challenges, about how we can

better support their work and move resources around to face the changing threats they're seeing.

It hasn't been raised to my attention. If that is an issue, I'm happy to undertake the work it would take to address any legislative constraints. It would obviously be up to Parliament to make any final determination there. I'm open to anything that makes us more effective at the border, but this is not something that I've—

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you, Ms. O'Gorman.

You mentioned earlier that you are aware, of course, that the jurisdiction for CBSA is not in between the ports. That's the RCMP. You are aware of those limitations, of course. Certainly we've seen reports from the U.S. border patrol about well over 20,000 people crossing between those ports of entry into the United States, and this certainly is an issue that is known in that regard.

To the commissioner of the RCMP in particular, the RCMP has the responsibility between ports of entry, of course, and I have concerns about the limitations of our staffing numbers to police 9,000 kilometres of border without the CBSA supporting those efforts between the ports.

I believe there's been a recent announcement that 25% of Atlantic Canada's RCMP officers will be moved to the border. Is that media report a correct assessment?

**Commr Michael Duheme:** I don't recall positioning myself or the organization at 25%. Deputy Commissioner Flynn might have.

The important thing to understand is that we do have that surge capacity within the organization. We saw it in events with Roxham Road, where we mobilized our folks from Montreal—some investigation teams—to the border. These people now have gone back to their respective units. Actually, the people who are assigned to the border are covering more of the border now that nobody is coming into Roxham Road and we can spread those people apart.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** I appreciate that very much. Certainly the RCMP officers and our border officers work very hard, and I'm very grateful for their courage and their dedication to the job.

My concern is that the RCMP is facing staffing issues across the country, particularly in rural and northern Canada. If the idea is to pull from those resources, would that not endanger, say, rural Manitoba? I know that my home province does face RCMP staffing issues, and we do have border crossers between the many kilometres between our ports of entry in that regard. Wouldn't there be a concern for those local communities if those RCMP resources were pulled and put in between the ports?

• (1120)

**Commr Michael Duheme:** The staffing issues that we're addressing right now are well known, and I would like to highlight that I've been working closely with Public Safety and the minister to acquire new technology to reduce the impact on resources so that we can rely more on technology and...I'm not going to say "reduce the footprint", but to use human resources accordingly with the latest technology that we have for the border.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you.

Ms. O'Gorman, will there be more boots on the ground in the next six weeks at the border, more officers to help in these efforts?

**Ms. Erin O'Gorman:** Will we be there?

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** That's correct.

**Ms. Erin O'Gorman:** We are always, as I said, moving our resources around to where the threats are. We have the ability to staff according to volumes, which does give us a flexibility. There's an impact every time we move people around, potentially, in terms of wait times. We have established wait time commitments, but we can change those if the threat increases.

I'm not worried about our ability to move people around. In fact, we're actively doing that right now as we look at potential risks relating to a northern border surge. We haven't seen those numbers increase at all at the ports of entry, but we have people who would be reassigned and moved from where they are. We do that every summer. We do that on a regular basis.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Dancho.

Next is Ms. Zahid for six minutes.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair.

Thanks to all the witnesses.

My first question is for the Department of Public Safety and Ms. Geddes.

Funding in these estimates has been set aside for the new Canada community security program and the Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence.

Can you speak to how the new Canada community security program builds off the success of SIP, the security infrastructure program, to keep safe the communities at risk of experiencing hate? Also, can you tell us about the important work that the Canada centre is doing, especially in the counter-radicalization space?

**Ms. Tricia Geddes:** I mentioned this a little bit in my opening remarks and I'm happy to elaborate a bit.

This is a really important program. It was so successful last year in terms of the uptake by community leadership that we made some important modifications to the community security infrastructure program and brought them forward in the new Canadian community security program. There are some important changes that have been made, in particular to enable us to support communities if they need to hire security guards, for example. We have had a really impressive reaction to this program.

I will say that it's unfortunate that it is required. The fact that anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and these types of issues are on the rise in Canada is deeply concerning to our department and to everyone in our portfolio agencies. We put in place these types of measures in order to be able to support the communities that most need them.

In addition, you did flag our Canada Centre. We do some really important prevention research, and we provide funding to key community leaders to work on prevention of these types of actions in the first place and to reduce the type of radicalization to violence that concerns our communities.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** Thank you.

Some of the religious places in my riding have taken advantage of that funding, and it really makes a difference. Thank you for that.

My next question is for the RCMP.

Commissioner, in October of this year, a federal RCMP investigation took down the largest and the most sophisticated drug lab in Canada. Can you please tell us about the raid and the work the RCMP continues to do to shut down illegal drug operations?

**Commr Michael Duheme:** From a national perspective, the RCMP works very closely with its law enforcement partners and with other government departments. We have a committee called CIROC, which is an integrated unit combatting organized crime. It's at the national level, and they are finalizing a strategy with tangible deliverables on all things fentanyl.

The work you're referring to is the wonderful work of our folks in British Columbia, which resulted in the seizure of a huge amount of fentanyl and precursors, as well as a number of firearms. When you break it down, you're looking at 95 million doses that were prevented from going to the streets from British Columbia.

We've also had good success over 2024. Several places, such as P.E.I. and Newfoundland, have had good success when it comes to fighting fentanyl.

• (1125)

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** When it comes to stopping criminals who would traffic in guns and drugs, there is an international element involved. Can you please update this committee on the partnerships the RCMP has with American law enforcement and how those partnerships are keeping our communities safe from firearms and fentanyl?

**Commr Michael Duheme:** There are many committees that we are part of, as is the CBSA. One is the cross-border crime forum. That involves several Canadian departments as well as American departments.

On the international scene, there's shared information on many fronts via the Five Eyes. At the North American Leaders' Summit, trilateral agreements were signed by the President of the United States, the Prime Minister of Canada and the President of Mexico.

We have a precursor-targeting intake program in Canada. We reach out to manufacturers, suppliers and whatnot. There is also a lot of work going on with DEA. Last March, there was actually a symposium in Toronto to bring Canadian and American colleagues together to discuss fentanyl and learn from each other.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** Do I have time?

**The Chair:** You still have time.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** Through Bill C-21, the government created new Criminal Code provisions targeting the printing of ghost guns. Can you please update this committee on how those new provisions are being used to combat the use of 3-D-printed ghost guns?

**Commr Michael Duheme:** I'd probably like Tricia to chime in, but I would say that ghost guns are a huge concern to us and to our American colleagues. For those who are not familiar, it's a gun printed by a 3-D printer for which metal parts can be purchased online. They fabricate the 3-D gun without any serial number. What we see from criminals and organized crime groups is that the gun is used once and then is disposed of. That is challenging, and I welcome the new legislation to allow us to seize the equipment that's now illegal when we do a search in a residence.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Madame Michaud, go ahead for six minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you all for being here. We're always happy to have you.

My first questions will be for the Commissioner of the RCMP.

Earlier, you mentioned Roxham Road and the relocation of personnel. Ms. Dancho referred to a CBC/Radio-Canada article that reported the following:

In an internal memo obtained by CBC/Radio-Canada, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Eastern Quebec Region management stated that "each program will contribute 25% of its regular member strength to support [border protection and integrity]."

Of course, this comes on the heels of U.S. President-elect Trump's threats to impose 25% tariffs, and the statement by Minister LeBlanc, who said Canada would beef up border security.

It reminded me of the situation we experienced at Roxham Road. At the time, many RCMP officers were deployed there.

What does it mean when officers from other sectors are called in and assigned to the border, for instance? A few months ago, we were talking about gun control and the fact that there were a lot of illegal imports of firearms. We wondered where the RCMP officers were. We had the impression that they were all deployed at Roxham Road to deal with irregular migrants.

We want to increase border security, and that's great, but I think other solutions could be used.

What are the consequences of moving RCMP officers in this way? Does this have any consequences for other struggles that are being waged in parallel with border security?

**Commr Michael Duheme:** Thank you for your question.

Of course, when you mobilize resources to meet a priority, it has consequences elsewhere. Like other police forces, we allocate resources according to priorities. Ms. Erin O'Gorman mentioned the same thing earlier.

In Quebec and Ontario, the border between ports of entry is the responsibility of the federal police. There is also a federal police presence across the country.

So this brings us back to Ms. Dancho's question about removing people from detachments that provide frontline security. However, before redeploying RCMP officers who are assigned to frontline services, we first look for resources in our federal police services.

As I said earlier, priorities are changing and we need to deploy people according to those priorities.

• (1130)

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Thank you.

Ms. O'Gorman, one solution that seems ideal is to allow border services officers to patrol between border crossings, as the RCMP can do. Yesterday, the president of the Customs and Immigration Union, Mr. Mark Weber, sent a letter to the Minister of Public Safety, Mr. LeBlanc, saying that union members were willing to do this work and had the expertise to do it. He also said that Canadian law might allow border services officers to do this kind of thing, but that an order-in-council passed in 1932 prevented them from doing so.

So it would take a bit of political will on the part of the minister to drop that decree and allow border services officers to go out and patrol and lend a hand between border crossings.

Are you aware of these requests from the union and agents? Do you think this could be a good solution for securing the borders?

**Ms. Erin O'Gorman:** Like my colleagues, I'm willing to consider any solution that would contribute to safety. There's no doubt about that. I agree with Mr. Weber that our officers are prepared to do what they have to do to keep Canada safe. They are motivated and they work hard every day.

So, a change in legislation is necessary, and as I said, it's really up to the government and Parliament to make that kind of decision.



For my part, I'd like to see an analysis of the effects of such a mandate on entry points. As I said, every day at the ports of entry, our employees are working to fulfil our mandate.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Thank you.

Border security is a hot topic these days. The Government of Canada just announced that it will do the same as the United States and reduce service hours at certain border crossings. That affects some ridings in Quebec, because those border crossings will have reduced hours of service beginning on January 6. That sends somewhat of a conflicting message, because at the same time, more officers are said to be needed at and in between border crossings.

When I raised that to the government, I was told that the decision had been made to reduce hours of service at certain border crossings that figures showed were not very busy. However, those figures were not broken down on an hourly basis.

I imagine you don't have the information in hand, but could you get back to the committee with the border crossing numbers for the Trout River and Herdman ports of entry, for instance? That way, we'll know when people cross the border there. We were told that, after 6 p.m., some ports of entry had just two crossings.

**Ms. Erin O'Gorman:** I want to make clear that, for us, it's not about reducing hours of service. It's about aligning Canada's hours of service at those border crossings with the U.S.'s. It is very hard for a Canadian or U.S. port of entry to operate when the port of entry in the other country is closed. We always try to align our hours of service with those of our partners on the other side of the border, and vice versa.

I can tell you that, for those 30 ports of entry, an average of two cars or trucks cross an hour. I can provide that information to the committee. However, it comes down to security. It's about making sure we have a partner on the other side of the border and redeploying officers to ports of entry that are higher risk because of larger volumes.

• (1135)

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. MacGregor, go ahead for six minutes.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all of the officials who are joining us at the committee today.

I'd like to start with Mr. Rogers and the service.

I've taken a look at the detailed breakdown of what you are asking for in these supplementary estimates. I can see that the lion's share of the funding you are requesting is to "mitigate security risks" and "enhance intelligence capabilities".

What I would like to know is how much of this funding is related to the new legislative authorities the Parliament of Canada granted CSIS through Bill C-70. I just want to get a sense of how that legislation is being operationalized and how these costs relate to that.

**Mr. Daniel Rogers (Director, Canadian Security Intelligence Service):** Thank you for the question. I'm happy to answer.

You're right that the bulk of the funding is for increasing intelligence capacity and mitigating security risks. I will say that it's not directly tied to the new legislation, but that will certainly help our ability to implement it.

An increase to our intelligence capacity means we will have better visibility for intelligence threats, which we can then share through resilience disclosures. This is something Bill C-70 affords us the ability to do. It also means that new tools in Bill C-70 will be implemented through this. We have new production orders and mechanisms that allow us to seek information. Some of this capacity will be directed towards things like the ability to use technology and digital tools to assist in our intelligence. Those authorities interrelate.

We will see an overall increase linked to Bill C-70 but not directly tied to it.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Thank you for that.

I have one other question about the detailed breakdown of the money you're asking for.

It's not something I normally associate with CSIS. There's a line item for "recovery of proceeds from parking fees collected". You're asking for \$1.7 million. I'd just like to know why \$1.7 million is necessary for this.

**Mr. Daniel Rogers:** I'll allow my CFO to respond, if that's all right.

**Mr. Jérôme Laliberté (Chief Financial Officer and Deputy Director of Administration, Canadian Security Intelligence Service):** Yes, it's a great question.

When our employees or visitors park on our HQ campus, they pay to do so. When we collect that funding, we give it back to the Receiver General, or the consolidated revenue fund. This is a mechanism for being transparent with Parliament. It comes back to us to pay for things like snow cleanup on the parking lot, maintenance of the parking lot and so on. It is those parking fees.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** I just wanted some clarity. It's not something you usually see with CSIS. Thanks for that.

I'd like to next turn to Ms. Kelly and the Correctional Service of Canada.

I met with the union that represents your correctional officers. I'm sure you're very well aware of their concerns. In the detailed breakdown of the asks you have in the supplementary estimates, I do see \$58 million for "changes in offender population and price fluctuations", and also \$29.7 million for "operations related to workplace injuries".

Ms. Kelly, I'd just like to know, through this funding that you're asking for from us, how you are specifically addressing the union's very real concerns about workplace safety.

Last month, I actually tried out their virtual reality simulator, which puts you directly into the environment. Workplace injuries are quite high in that line of work, and so are the mental health demands. I'd like to know how this funding is being used to tackle the union's very real concerns.

**Ms. Anne Kelly (Commissioner, Correctional Service of Canada):** In terms of the funding, the \$29.7 million is really an increase in costs for workers' compensation benefits. That's what it's for.

In terms of your question about staff safety, I too put on the goggles and saw the environment in which they work, which is extremely challenging.

At our national labour management meetings, staff safety is something that we discuss regularly. For our officers, we provide training, we provide them with equipment and we do threat risk assessments.

One issue that's been a real challenge for the service, though, is drones. Drones have increased in the last few years by 271%, which is huge. Sometimes, when they are successful in dropping items, the items that are seized are, unfortunately, drugs and sometimes weapons. This increases the violence in our institutions.

In terms of drones, we're investing a lot and we have a layered approach.

• (1140)

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** I have only a minute left and I want to get one question to Ms. Geddes from the Department of Public Safety.

I noticed that the \$800 million that you are requesting for "Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements" is on top of the \$550 million that I believe was already allocated. That's more than 100% of what's already been allocated, which is going to bring our total financial commitments to \$1.3 billion.

It's obvious that the costs related to climate change are going up and up. I would just like to know if the department is doing any kind of forecasts.

Is this \$800 million next year going to turn into \$1 billion and \$2 billion the year after that?

I think taxpayers really need to have a clear picture of how the department is forecasting what future demands are going to be like.

**Ms. Tricia Geddes:** Thank you very much for the question.

Some of the complexity around our DFAA legislation is that we're reliant on the provinces and territories to submit their re-

sourcing asks. Sometimes this can happen years after an event. It's actually retrospective as opposed to prospective. We're operating within an envelope.

In terms of our ability to determine when the provinces and territories will be able to align their funding requirements to our ability to apportion it, we do our best to keep in constant contact with the provinces and territories in that regard, but it is a little difficult sometimes to predict, because we are certainly in receive mode.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

That concludes the first round. Naturally, the second round commences.

Ms. Dancho, you have five minutes.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is for the RCMP commissioner.

You mentioned to my colleague from the Bloc that to pull any RCMP resources to redeploy to the border, the primary wave would be from federal resourcing rather than the contract policing or the community policing, so to speak.

How many officers are you preparing to redeploy to the border from federal resources?

**Commr Michael Duheme:** Right now, if there's going to be a surge, we don't have any intelligence to indicate where the surge is going to be, so we'll have to wait for announcements. The organization has to be nimble enough to identify where these hot spots are.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** I'm so sorry. I was not clear.

It's regarding the threat from President-elect Trump about the 25% tariffs because of the more than 20,000 individuals who crossed from Canada into the United States and the 12,000 kilograms of various illicit substances. That seems to be their focus and their threat of, really, an economic recession in Canada.

My question is, what is the RCMP going to do to redeploy its efforts to the border? As they've outlined, the CBSA does not have jurisdiction between the ports of entry. The issue is in your jurisdiction, between the ports of entry.

Are you saying that there's no commitment and there's no plan right now to redeploy those federal resources?

**Commr Michael Duheme:** There are contingency plans being built as to what units are impacted if we need that surge capacity. Depending on the situation, we could even look at redeploying cadets out of training, just like we did on Parliament Hill in 2014, temporarily, depending on the surge we're facing.

Throughout the country, Deputy Commissioner Mark Flynn, who's in charge of federal policing, is in lockstep with all the commanding officers. There's a contingency plan set for surge capacities.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you. Again, I'm not necessarily focused on the.... Of course, we are concerned very much about the surge that may come in from the United States, but for the purposes of what the Trump administration is threatening and the economic recession that they're threatening, they're saying that right now this is happening. Their concern is around the people and the drugs coming from Canada to the U.S. It's my understanding that right now, with the status quo right now, which the Americans have the issue with, there's no plan, if things remain as they are now, to redeploy RCMP resources between the ports of entry.

**Commr Michael Duheme:** The challenging part with it, Mr. Chair, is that the offence is only committed once they cross the border. That is challenging.

Again, it's going to be with collaboration. An incident happened on just the 29th, when six individuals crossed in Manitoba, near Emerson. The USBP called us right away. We were able to locate the six individuals and whatnot, so there is collaboration, Mr. Chair, but I think it will be really important to identify those hot areas based on the position that the U.S. will take.

• (1145)

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** I see. What you're saying is that you're not concerned about the individuals who are approaching the border, and when they do cross the border, that problem is for the border patrol in the U.S.

**Commr Michael Duheme:** Well, if you go back to Roxham Road, it was the other way around.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Right.

**Commr Michael Duheme:** People were actually lined up in the United States to come through to Canada. The offence actually happens once they cross the border, sadly enough, but again, it's more important than ever to have the right technology and the right partnership south of the border. The partnership with the USBP is very strong.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you.

I'll turn now to the CBSA.

Ms. O'Gorman, we're hearing concerns raised from Mr. Weber, the union president for our border agents, that the issue of the crossing, whether northward or southward, is between the ports of entry. You are limited in your jurisdiction to do that. The RCMP has outlined that there's not any immediate plan to redeploy RCMP resources between the ports of entry to stop the influx into the U.S. from Canada, which is the primary concern of the incoming American administration.

What discussions have you had with the RCMP, if any, to expand your jurisdiction and expand the mandate of the CBSA to fill some of those gaps between ports of entry? Has there been any discussion?

I'll point out that it's been 20 days since the new border czar, Tom Homan, flagged this as a major issue that he's going to have with Canada and indicated that this was going to be a problem.

Over a week ago, President-elect Trump announced tariffs that will do very frightening things to our economy. I'm just not getting a sense that there's any immediate action to deploy any new resources from the RCMP or the CBSA between the ports of entry, which is the issue with the Americans right now. I'm concerned about that.

Can you comment?

**Ms. Erin O'Gorman:** There are a few things here. We work with the RCMP every day in executing our respective mandates. At my level and all the way down to the front line, our officers know each other. They talk to each other.

Irregular migration has been steadily decreasing. That's not to say that it's not happening; the CBSA processes people who come and seek asylum through the air mode and the land mode every day. I say that just to say that we are implementing the STCA every day. That is to say, people come from the U.S. and seek asylum into Canada. We determine whether they meet an exception to the STCA. If they don't, we return them. The U.S. does the same thing. I think it's important to note that at the ports of entry, we are applying the STCA, and it's working.

In terms of the situation between the ports, we share targeting information and we share intelligence. We work in integrated border enforcement teams that include the U.S. There are also border enforcement task forces on the U.S. side with embedded RCMP and CBSA officers.

Whether we're stepping out to do patrols that we don't have the authority to do...but I'm satisfied that from an intelligence and information-sharing perspective, we're doing it every day, all the time, across the country.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you both.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Dancho.

Ms. Damoff, you have five minutes.

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.):** Thank you.

Thank you to all the officials for being here.

I just want to make a comment before I start.

When I first started on the public safety committee back in 2016, I and my assistant Ellen were the only two women in the room. Every member and every official, and everyone sitting out there, was a man. It's quite something to see elected officials and representatives of the department being far more diverse than it was when I first sat on this committee. That was just an observation I made when we all sat down.

Commissioner, I saw on social media a post from a Conservative candidate talking about cuts to the RCMP. It was in response to an email that I guess you had sent to members. Can you confirm that regular uniformed members of the RCMP have been excluded from the responsible government spending initiative?

**Commr Michael Duheme:** The purpose of that email.... It was well known within the government that there would be cuts in several departments, and people within the organization were questioning how we would be affected. It was more to provide an awareness for them that we're working closely with Sam and the senior executive committee to look at areas that could be impacted.

That being said, there's still an ongoing conversation with the minister with regard to what those cuts may look like, if any.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Is it going to impact the members themselves? Are you going to be laying off any RCMP members? Everything we've heard so far today is the opposite.

**Commr Michael Duheme:** The conversation initially was that the frontline members—the uniformed members, police officers, sworn-in officers—would not be affected, but then you create this imbalance because you have a critical infrastructure that's supporting everything we do on the front line. We have scientists in the labs. We have analysts. To say that we're going to cut just in this area is going to be an imbalance, and the right support for the people on the front line may just not be there.

There's an ongoing conversation with the minister on that.

• (1150)

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Thank you.

My next question is for Director Rogers.

We've had a number of conversations at this committee about foreign interference, as you know. In fact, you appeared at the committee on that. As we know, the Leader of the Opposition has refused to get a top secret security clearance.

My question is this: Could you let us know, in this committee, the difference between a threat reduction measure and a top secret security clearance?

**Mr. Daniel Rogers:** Thank you for the question. I can try to answer that.

The most fundamental way of receiving top secret information is to obtain a clearance and to receive it. Having a clearance, whether it's top secret, secret or otherwise, would give someone access to that information if they have a need to know it. That's the general way that classified information is shared within and outside of the government.

The threat reduction measures available to the service allow us to apply a legal test and a legal framework that allow us, in certain instances, to disclose information to someone who does not have a security clearance in order to reduce a threat. That doesn't require the person to whom we're disclosing the information to have a security clearance, but it does constrain us within that framework with the information that we're able to share, because there is a certain legal test to be able to meet the threshold to be able to reduce a threat.

It is a fairly unique way of sharing information. It's not the only way, but that's the main difference.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Just to be clear, you're not able to share as much information. For example, all of the other party leaders have obtained that top secret security clearance, but you are limited in the information you can share in this case. Is that correct?

**Mr. Daniel Rogers:** Yes. With the threat reduction measure, there's a constrained process, and we have to meet certain tests to be able to share information specifically related to the threat we are trying to mitigate.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** With the minute I have left, Ms. Geddes—thank you for being here—I wonder if you could update us on what the department has been doing to implement Bill C-21. We heard about ghost guns. I can't tell you how proud I was to see police making an arrest using provisions of the bill that we had in there.

I wonder if you could update us on some of the other things you've been working on.

**Ms. Tricia Geddes:** There are a number of regulatory amendments brought forward by Bill C-21. Some of those have to do with gender-based violence, and they're the ones I personally feel very strongly about.

We're doing some significant work to be able to accelerate and advance all the regulatory amendments included within Bill C-21. We've made progress already, but there's more to be done. One of our top initiatives right now is to be able to advance all the regulatory changes brought about by Bill C-21.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** I met recently with a group from New Zealand, and they said our red flag and yellow flag provisions were the best in the world and that our ghost gun provisions were far ahead of every other country in the world.

Kudos to you folks, but also to us for getting that bill passed.

**The Chair:** That's great. Thank you, Ms. Damoff.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Michaud, you may go ahead for two and a half minutes.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to continue the discussion with Ms. Geddes regarding Bill C-21.

It's wonderful to hear that the measures we passed are some of the best in the world, but the fact remains: they have to be in force. Unfortunately, those measures still aren't in force nearly a year after Bill C-21's passage.

The government also promised to bring in an assault-style firearms compensation program this fall. The program still isn't in place, and this Friday marks the 35th anniversary of the tragedy at Ecole polytechnique, a sad anniversary indeed.

For some 30 years, the group of women representing survivors and family members affected by the tragedy has been calling on the government to ban military-style assault weapons for good. An order in council banning some 1,500 models was passed a few years ago, but other models are still being sold.

As you are very aware, under Bill C-21, the definition of a prohibited firearm is evergreen. That means it applies only to firearms designed after the bill's passage. As a result, hundreds of models are still being sold.

PolyRemembers and a number of other groups are worried about the fact that someone who owns a prohibited model can sell it back to the government and take the money to buy a similar model that is still being sold. According to PolyRemembers, introducing a buyback program is well and good, but there is absolutely no point to the program if it allows people to buy models that are still being sold.

I think your government is serious about its pledge to bring in a buyback program. However, before such a program is introduced, is the government going to make sure that all military-style assault weapons are banned, so as not to waste taxpayer money? Owners can use the money they get from the buyback program, so it's important to make sure that the measures are actually effective in controlling guns.

We recommended creating a committee to examine the models still being sold to determine which ones could reasonably be used for hunting and which ones couldn't.

It seems to be too late to establish any such committee. I think the RCMP has the expertise to determine which firearms are used for hunting and which ones aren't. The committee met with witnesses, and apparently indigenous communities use the SKS for hunting.

Has there been any progress on the issue? When the government introduces its buyback program, will it ban all military-style assault weapons?

• (1155)

[English]

**Ms. Tricia Geddes:** There are a series of pieces in that question, so I'm going to try to address all of them quickly, as I know we have limited time.

To be clear, further to the last question, there's obviously very important work that we still need to do to see Bill C-321 through, and all the regulatory amendments, including, as we mentioned, some significant gender-based violence regulations that I think are quite critical.

The second part is about the firearms compensation program. As we have mentioned previously here, and I know the minister has mentioned it, there are two phases planned for that.

The first phase would involve purchasing all the firearms that are currently banned from businesses, and that is happening in the near term.

The final part of the question related to other models of firearms that need to be assessed. I can assure you that the public safety employees working very closely with the RCMP firearms centre are in the process of reviewing all other models to ensure that we can work quickly to be able to identify assault-style firearms within the other models. We will continue to consult other experts, as we are able, to do so.

**The Chair:** That's great. Thank you.

We have Mr. MacGregor for two and a half minutes.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think I'll turn my questions to the RCMP. Because I have only two and a half minutes, maybe I'll load up two questions for you.

I met with the NPF, the National Police Federation, in October, I think, and one item that they identified with me was that they would like to see federal policing program services bolstered. That's a fair ask, because we are very aware in this committee of the dangers that are being posed by organized crime, whether with car thefts, drug trafficking, human trafficking—you name it. That's a very real threat.

Commissioner, my first question is on how you are working with the union to address that particular ask.

The other question is regarding the superlab bust in Falkland, B.C. In a previous life, I used to be a tree planter, and I know Falkland, B.C., really well. To have a laboratory of that magnitude in that small rural community is quite a shock. From my own research, I know now that organized crime is really looking into the precursors to the precursors. Soon you're going to have a chemist who is skilled enough to go to everyday items.

Can you talk a little bit about the challenge the RCMP is facing? I know you're continually adding a list of precursors that are used to manufacture drugs like methamphetamine and fentanyl. How are you addressing the challenge when you get skilled chemists who are going to go back far enough along the chain to get items that are available to everyday people?

**Commr Michael Duheme:** Mr. Chair, on the first part of the question with regard to federal policing, there's been work for the last couple of years now looking at how we can increase the capacity of federal policing by looking at how we train our members when they come in.

Right now, our academy at Depot in Saskatchewan, in Regina, is used for every police officer that comes in, regardless of the function they're going to do. I think we do a really good job to prepare our police officers to go to the front line, but it doesn't do much for the federal policing environment. What we're looking at is a different career stream within the organization whereby people would have a choice to do contract work or federal policing work with the appropriate training for federal policing.

On your second question, it's well known that chemists are involved, be it in meth or fentanyl. It is a challenge. They usually go into small areas, but good work is being done by sharing intelligence with the CBSA, the USBP and the DEA and working together to address that.

Look at the success we've had with the FBI with the case of the Canadian ex-Olympian snowboarder who's still on the loose right now. This was a huge fall in which we contributed, and it touched on the importing of fentanyl coming up through the United States to our country.

● (1200)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

That concludes the first hour.

Now I'd like to suspend for maybe 30 seconds to give the minister a chance to sit down.

● (1200)

(Pause)

● (1200)

**The Chair:** I call the meeting back to order.

I would like to welcome the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc.

I now invite the minister to make an opening statement of up to five minutes.

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs):** Mr. Chair, thank you.

Colleagues, thank you for joining us. I hope that you were kind and gentle to the senior officials who were here before me. I hope that the same spirit of kindness continues for the next hour.

Mr. Chair, let me begin by congratulating you on assuming the chair of this important committee. I wish you a successful stewardship of this committee.

Teasing aside, I want to thank my colleagues, the officials. It's quite a collection of horsepower from the Public Safety portfolio. I'm glad that they were able to be here at 11 o'clock.

As you know, Mr. Chair, I was in a cabinet meeting that's still ongoing, and I will sadly excuse myself at one o'clock sharp because, as you know, the leaders of the opposition are meeting with the Prime Minister to talk about borders and border security and are meeting with President-elect Trump on Friday, and I was asked to provide an update. If you see me excuse myself, it will be for that reason.

It's also a moment to mention Dan Rogers and Joanne Blanchard. Joanne has assumed the chair of the National Parole Board, and Dan is the director of CSIS. It's my first time with them before this committee, and I think that they'll serve Canadians in an outstanding way. I'm happy to be here with them.

[*Translation*]

Back in March, I appeared before the committee to discuss my mandate. We talked about the work the government had done to apprehend criminals attempting to smuggle drugs and weapons into the country, as well as efforts to combat auto theft. We talked about foreign interference and the need to bring forward and pass legislation giving the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, or CSIS, the modern tools it needs to protect Canada. Since then, Canada's law enforcement agencies have done some excellent work.

Over the past two years, the Canada Border Services Agency, or CBSA, has intercepted more than 13 tonnes of illegal drugs at land border crossings across the country. In 2023, the CBSA seized more than 900 prohibited firearms and over 27,000 weapons. In June 2024, law enforcement agencies across the country took part in a nationwide operation to crack down on the manufacturing and trafficking of ghost guns. They seized approximately 440 traditional and 3-D-printed firearms, as well as fifty-two 3-D printers.

● (1205)

[*English*]

As well, as colleagues will know, in October of this year, federal RCMP forces in British Columbia took down the largest, most sophisticated drug lab in Canada. This is the excellent work that the RCMP, with their partners, do in every corner of our country every day. The combined fentanyl and precursors seized at this facility alone would have amounted to 95 million potentially lethal doses of fentanyl entering our communities or being exported abroad.

On the auto theft front—something that this committee has leaned into—the Canada Border Services Agency has intercepted more than 2,000 stolen vehicles in rail yards and ports to date this year alone, already exceeding last year's work, but we recognize that there is, obviously, more good work to be done. Early trends for 2024 show a 17% reduction in auto theft, but we still recognize that these figures remain stubbornly high.

Additionally, in October of this year, the RCMP took the unprecedented step of releasing findings with respect to involvement of agents of the Government of India in serious criminal activity on Canadian soil. Due to that announcement and subsequent actions taken by the government and law enforcement agencies, to quote the commissioner of the RCMP—it's kind of awkward to quote him when he's sitting at the table, but this will flatter him—there has been a “significant reduction” to the public safety threat posed.

Additionally, in the supplementary estimates before you, Mr. Chair, our government is investing \$16 million to support the RCMP's foreign interference-related criminal investigations. Those same estimates show that CSIS's budget is increasing by more than \$53 million this year. While detailed breakdowns of CSIS expenditures are, understandably, classified, I can say that the tools available to CSIS have been strengthened and modernized with the passage of Bill C-70, and I thank colleagues on this committee for the good work that we did together in that regard.

This crucial funding will ensure CSIS can continue to keep Canadians safe from such threats as violent extremism and foreign interference. CSIS's budget will have increased 48% compared to 10 years ago. Under our government's stewardship, the RCMP will be receiving 101% more funding to do the important work they do for Canadians in this same period. These investments and the results that are being achieved, I think, should attest to everyone the collective concern all of us have around public safety.

Last year the government proposed a \$637-million increase in the budgets of our public safety department and portfolio agencies. This year it's over \$2 billion. Investments found in these supplementary estimates will combat auto theft, advance the work that the government and partner agencies are doing to combat foreign interference, provide increased police presence and investigative work to those experiencing violent hate and continue to keep communities safe across the country.

[Translation]

Our government will continue making responsible investments to keep our country safe.

I hope we can count on the support of all parliamentarians and members of this committee to get the votes in the supplementary estimates before you passed quickly.

[English]

I don't think it will surprise you that I'm very excited about the opportunity to answer questions from colleagues. It's something I look forward to. I was counting the days until I'd have this opportunity. It was like, "How many shopping days left before Christmas?" You can't imagine, Mr. Chair, how happy I am to be here with you this morning.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister. It's great to have you here.

I now open the floor up to questions.

Ms. Dancho, go ahead for six minutes.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you, Minister, for being here.

There are 48 days until President Trump is inaugurated on January 20. In the next six weeks, how many more additional RCMP officers will be redeployed to the border to patrol between ports of entry by January 20, sir?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** The government has been working with the RCMP, and CBSA in particular, on how we can increase both the redeployment of officers and acquire new technology and equipment. We will have announcements to make in the coming weeks, recognizing that January 20 is, obviously, an important moment.

I've heard the commissioner's public comments, and he's talked to me about the ongoing redeployment the RCMP and the CBSA may make, dependent upon threat assessment. I can assure you that this work is ongoing, and the details will be... Some of it's operational police planning, which I would leave to the commissioner, but I'm happy to talk publicly about it.

• (1210)

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you, Minister.

May I ask again about the numbers?

What are the redeployment numbers for the border. You've made it quite clear, sir, that between ports of entry, it is RCMP jurisdiction. How many will be redeployed?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** Again, Ms. Dancho, that is a very good question. I think, as a government, we haven't made those final decisions. We're working based on advice from the CBSA and the RCMP, of course.

I'll look to the commissioner and the president about whether they are in a position to say precisely how many officers will be in what particular sector or at what border crossing. Some of this might, in fact, be operational information.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you.

Actually, it's fine. We just spoke about it. It doesn't seem there have been any conversations thus far about redeploying specific resources to the border between ports of entry right now.

It's only if there is a surge from the United States into Canada. Of course, we know the Americans have an issue with what's coming from Canada into the United States. Thus far, there is no number or any plan available, from what we understand, to redeploy RCMP resources. There's also no plan to increase border agents.

Is there a number in your mind for what the plan is to increase border agents' boots on the ground by the 20th? What is the number by which you're looking to increase it?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** Again, as I said publicly, and as we reassured our American friends at the dinner Friday evening in Palm Beach, we will be increasing those numbers. I received some advice from the Canada Border Services Agency and the RCMP. I am working with the Minister of Finance, and we'll be happy to announce the details, as far as possible, when they are finalized.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you, Minister.

Again, you have been talking about a plan, but there don't seem to be any concrete meetings happening to redeploy between the borders right now. That is an area of concern, because you said that you're not interested in expanding—that it's not a priority to expand the CBSA mandate. I'm sure you saw communications from the union president that it's so frustrating, as a border agency, to see these individuals crossing, but it's not in their jurisdiction.

Will you be expanding the CBSA mandate to acting between ports of entry, given these dynamics?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** Ms. Dancho, you asked two questions.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** There were three—

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** On the first one, there haven't been any meetings to discuss redeployment. I had an opportunity yesterday to discuss potential options in this regard with the president of the CBSA, the commissioner of the RCMP and our deputy minister. Those meetings have been ongoing as recently as this time yesterday.

I don't want to correct you. You said that I said we're not interested in expanding the CBSA mandate. I'm not sure that's entirely accurate. What I said is that we're interested in taking immediate steps to reassure Canadians and Americans that the border remains secure and that the integrity of the border is protected.

However, we're always interested. We've taken notes of the union president's comments. The commissioner and I have talked about this issue in the past. We haven't made any decisions in that regard, but we are open to considering that as well.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you.

What is the immediate step on the redeployment numbers?

You can't tell me the numbers of how many you're going to redeploy. The commissioner is also not aware of any plan in that regard, and the CBSA president has not heard any asks from you to increase the boots on the ground. It doesn't seem that there is immediate action forthcoming on this.

Again, it's 48 days away. We're staring down the barrel of a 25% tariff and an economic recession, and there isn't a concrete plan that I'm hearing from you about actual boots on the ground to address the concerns of the Americans. There is no number right now for redeployment between ports of entry from the RCMP or the CBSA.

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** Again, Ms. Dancho, I don't imagine you'd want to put words in the mouth of the commissioner or the president of the CBSA.

I asked them about that, probably a month and a half or two months ago, and a number of times since the election of President-elect Trump. As you noted, the initial concern was about a potential south-to-north flow of people arriving at the border. That was the conversation that captivated Canadians a few weeks ago. You've seen, in light of the president-elect's comments a week ago, that this has changed to issues around fentanyl as well.

I received advice from the commissioner of the RCMP and the president of the CBSA in terms of additional resources, including personnel we could recruit, hire and redeploy, as well as equipment.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you, Minister.

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** As I said, I am working with the Minister of Finance and will be happy to tell Canadians about this important work when it's finalized.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** This is a concern we've heard about for 20 days now from President-elect Trump. The borders are going to be a problem. However, there is no commitment that you've made today—or in the past week, certainly, since your trip to Mar-a-Lago—regarding additional resources.

• (1215)

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** I just made that commitment.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** How many is it, though?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** Again, I told you that I...

We're repeating ourselves. It's a circular argument.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** How many...?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** I said that when we have finalized....

There will be additional resources in human resources and equipment. We've said that consistently.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** By January 20....

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** We will be making announcements in terms of procurement and personnel before that date. We are finalizing that now, as a government, based on the good advice we receive from the RCMP and from the Canada Border Services Agency.

I understand it's exciting, and Canadians want to understand it—

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Minister, respectfully—

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** —and the good news is that it's coming.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Dancho. Your time is up.

Thank you, Minister.

Ms. O'Connell, you have six minutes.

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Minister and officials, for being here.

That last series of questions would suggest that there have been zero investments made or protections done for our borders and that we are only looking at securing our borders in 48 days.

I find that to be ridiculous, especially given that even in the supplementary estimates that we're looking at here, which would have been worked on previous to any American election, there are in fact investments going into our border.

Minister, my question to you is twofold.

One, the commissioner, in our previous panel, mentioned surge capacity and that there isn't the intelligence yet to suggest that a surge is needed. However, in the event that this changes, they are ready, so that's part of addressing this.



Two, we also have border security measures that we want to work with the Americans on, in particular when it comes to guns entering the border. When it's dealing with President-elect Trump's concerns around securing borders, it is the southern border, where there were over 2.1 million entries. What are we doing not only to secure our borders on both sides, but also to increase resources?

The fact is that we have consistently been making these sorts of investments. We've always been committed to ensuring that our partnership with the U.S. is important, and that goes both ways in terms of imports of things like illegal drugs and guns.

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** Ms. O'Connell, I share your view that the continued security and integrity of the border is something that has, I think, occupied our government over the last 10 years.

You noted, for example, investments that have been made consistently over a number of years. For example, 10 years ago, the budget for CSIS was \$550 million; with these estimates, it'll be over \$764 million. The Border Services Agency budget was \$2 billion in 2014; it will now be \$2.8 billion. The RCMP budget was over \$2.8 billion in 2014, and with these estimates, it'll be over \$5.7 billion. We have continued to make investments, but we recognize, as we've said publicly, that there's always more work we can do.

I have become a very considerable fan of the excellent work that all of the agencies represented at the table do to protect Canadians and keep them safe. I've seen first-hand the RCMP and CBSA in terms of border security. I've seen briefings from our friends at CSIS that allow the RCMP and the CBSA to be prepared, as you noted, for intelligence-driven information that allows them to make operational decisions in their judgment.

Finally, Ms. O'Connell, I think your question was a good one. This was the conversation at Mar-a-Lago on Friday evening. It is a shared concern. We told President-elect Trump and his future cabinet secretaries that the fight against fentanyl was one that Canada absolutely understood. We have the same objective as they do—to dismantle the criminal gangs and Mexican cartels and to stop the arrival of precursor chemicals largely, but not exclusively, from China. That's work that's done every day by the men and women represented at this table with me, and the people who work for them. It's very important work that we should be proud of, because a great deal of it is done with American partners.

I think the conversation with the Americans on Friday evening was revealing, in the sense that we all took stock of the integrated border enforcement teams, for example. The commissioner will correct me if I have the geography wrong, but the Province of Quebec has an integrated border enforcement team. Partners from the Sûreté du Québec, for example, participate in this work. This model repeats itself in other parts of the country. The CBSA is a partner.

This is an ongoing and active effort that so many people lean in on. Recognizing, as Ms. Dancho said, the threat of potentially devastating tariff applications to Canadians and the Canadian economy means that we need to show Canadians—and by consequence, our American friends—that this work is ongoing and that we're prepared to step up in a visible way as well.

• (1220)

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell:** That's perfect. Thank you.

On that, there has been a lot of discussion around staffing levels at the CBSA. We know that under the Harper government, there were nearly a thousand CBSA employees cut. We reinstated that funding and actually increased it, but it has been raised that there have been questions around whether or not those staffing levels are there.

I didn't have an opportunity in the first round to ask this question, but can you or your officials confirm our staffing investments at CBSA? Has staffing gone down or has it gone up?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** Again, Ms. O'Connell, your question is a good one.

If you just look over a nine-year period, our government, as I indicated, has increased the CBSA budget by over \$800 million. I have ongoing and active conversations with Ms. O'Gorman, the president, in terms of what their needs are.

I have received the Christmas list from the CBSA and the RCMP of additional resources that they think, in their judgment, would support this work, but if the president has precise details on the staffing levels, I would invite her, if there's time, to offer those views.

**Ms. Erin O'Gorman:** The CBSA has 16,300 of what we call full-time people—

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** FTEs is the bureaucratic term.

**Ms. Erin O'Gorman:** —8,500 of whom are frontline employees. Then, if you were asking for 2014, that number would be 13,700.

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell:** That's significantly more. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. O'Connell.

[Translation]

Ms. Michaud, you may go ahead. You have six minutes.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Leblanc, thank you for being here. It's always a pleasure to see you at the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

November 7, the day after Mr. Trump was elected, I had the opportunity to speak with you at the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. Mr. Trump had said he was planning to deport millions of migrants, migrants who could very well try to come to Canada. That worried me, so I asked you about the security of our borders. You told me then that everything was fine, that you had a plan, that you didn't need to make any special provisions and that you would handle any crisis that arose as appropriate. That's more or less what you said.

Last week, you said that, given Mr. Trump's threat to impose 25% tariffs, you planned to invest more resources in the border, deploy more personnel, equipment, drones and helicopters. Basically, it turns out that things weren't as fine as you'd initially thought and that you may not have been ready enough. That's how I see it.

I also gather that you want more people posted along the border because, according to a recent Radio-Canada article, there could be just six officers per shift covering a stretch of the Canada-U.S. border a little more than 160 kilometres long. That's very good. I understand that the RCMP is responsible for covering the area in between ports of entry.

However, as I was discussing with the commissioner earlier, when you decide to redeploy officers, in other words, put more RCMP officers along the border, it obviously affects other departments, other efforts to respond to other public safety issues. The president of the Customs and Immigration Union, Mark Weber, said his officers, or union members, had the expertise to patrol in between ports of entry and want to be able to do so.

Nothing in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act or the Customs Act prevents the CBSA from doing that. It's actually an order in council that is preventing the agency from taking on that role. Apparently the order in council is from 1932. That's what Mr. Weber said in the letter he sent you yesterday.

From your remarks a bit earlier, it doesn't seem to be a priority of yours to expand the CBSA's role so that border officers are empowered to patrol in between ports of entry and help out RCMP officers.

In the current context, border security seems to be a priority, so why not let CBSA officers, who have the expertise, patrol in between ports of entry?

• (1225)

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** Ms. Michaud, thank you for your 25 questions.

I remember telling you the day after the American election that I wasn't worried about a possible upsurge of migrants from the south to the north, because the RCMP and Canada Border Services Agency were ready. I haven't changed my mind on this issue.

That said, you're right about the comments made by Mr. Trump a week ago. At that time, the challenge was the fight against fentanyl. We discussed this at Mar-a-Lago on Friday evening.

The Americans are worried about the number of people trying to enter the United States from Canada. We must assure them and Canadians that we can bring the numbers down and remain a first-rate partner in the fight against fentanyl, as I said. I think that this is still the case.

You raised another good point regarding the mandate of border services officers in comparison with the mandate of RCMP officers.

I completely agree with you. Should an emergency or operational circumstance require the reassignment of police officers by Commissioner Michael Duheme and his commanding officer in Quebec,

for example, it could take precedence over other investigations. This wouldn't be ideal and it would be a challenge.

However, we've been dealing with this type of challenge for decades by managing threats. As a result, we'll be increasing the number of recruits in the depot division of the RCMP academy in Regina. The commissioner has already made considerable progress on this front and the trends in this area are encouraging. However, recruitment doesn't happen overnight.

I'm intrigued by the idea of looking at the Canada Border Services Agency's mandate. I had informal discussions on this topic with the president of the Canada Border Services Agency and the commissioner a number of months ago, well before the American election.

That said, it remains to be seen whether this approach would work. I visited the border services college in Rigaud. It's a great place to train. However, we can't recruit hundreds of border services officers overnight, although 500 join the ranks every year.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** I gather that the Canada Border Services Agency is short of officers.

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** That's not what I said. You said that.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Would this explain the reduced opening hours at some border crossings? Is there a plan to reassign officers to busier crossings? Is this why the Canada Border Services Agency is short of human resources and why you're turning to the RCMP to secure the border?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** The RCMP plays a key role in securing the border in partnership with the Canada Border Services Agency. The two aren't mutually exclusive.

I don't agree with your statement that we're short of border services officers.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** It was a question.

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** I was also a member of the opposition. I understand your approach to asking questions and you're quite good at it.

However, you're right about the opening hours at some border crossings. I understand that the agency's president answered this question while I was at a cabinet meeting. I also answered a question on this topic from one of your colleagues in the House of Commons. The opening hours have been aligned with the hours at our American partners' border crossings.

This topic has been the focus of discussions for months, if not years. The idea is to increase security. For example, if the Americans unilaterally close their side of the border for certain hours and an individual crosses the border, the safe third country agreement states that the individual could be apprehended and sent back to the United States. However, if no one is at the border crossing on the other side of the border, should the individual be taken to a Quebec provincial police station in a small town in Quebec?

Standardized opening hours are one way to increase security. The Canada Border Services Agency has been having these types of discussions with its American partner for a long time. I've been assured that this doesn't affect border security in any way.

• (1230)

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Next is Mr. MacGregor for six minutes.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome to the committee, Minister. It's good to see you back here.

It's been nine years since those devastating Conservative cuts to the CBSA, which made our border less safe. To hear the Conservatives at the committee today asking for more resources when they significantly contributed to the deficit that the CBSA is operating with is really quite incredible.

However, I'm not going to let you off the hook either, because—

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** Keep going. It sounds good.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** —when Ms. O'Connell asked you a question, you painted a pretty rosy picture.

I'm going to read you a quote from Mark Weber on October 17. He appeared at a press conference with NDP leader Jagmeet Singh. He said:

I'll be honest, the reality at CBSA is bleak: Staffing wise, past Conservative cuts have left ports of entry severely understaffed. We would need almost 3000 additional officers from coast to coast to meet operational requirements. Current training facilities can only train up to 600 officers a year, which does not even cover attrition.

Nine years ago, we had devastating Conservative cuts. You've just tried to paint a rosy picture.

Mark Weber's quote seems to be quite the opposite of what you just told this committee. Can you explain the difference?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** Sure, Mr. MacGregor. Thank you for the question. I particularly liked the first part of your question. I thought that was excellent.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** I'm sure you did.

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** Maybe I didn't paint a rosy picture. Maybe it was a less sombre picture, because we have, as I noted, increased the resources for the CBSA.

However, I recognize, Mr. MacGregor, that we need to do more and that the responsibility they have is enormous. The kinds of threats we see at the border include human trafficking, gun smug-

gling and drugs. In the criminal intelligence work they do, there are 200 criminal investigators who work at the CBSA. These people are doing extraordinary work, but I totally share the view you expressed and the view of the union president, who has said publicly that we can continue to increase the human resource posture.

That's exactly what I hope I will be talking about publicly in the next few weeks, recognizing that we can continue to do more. I think we have been supportive. I hope we've been supportive of their good work, but we haven't finished, and I hope we can look forward to your support on exactly that, as we will do more.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Thank you, Minister.

I want to zero in on your recent meeting with the president-elect at Mar-a-Lago. I think a lot of what's been happening in Canada has been reactive to the president-elect's comments. What are we going to do?

However, you need to remember, as the Minister of Public Safety, that your first and foremost priority is Canadians on this side of the border. We have very real concerns on our side of the border about what is flowing into our country. There's a consequence in Canada to living beside the largest small arms manufacturer in the world.

Minister, how did you use that opportunity to present Canada's concerns, particularly with regard to the flow of illegal firearms that are finding their way into many of Canada's major cities?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** That is exactly—almost in those words—something we addressed with President Trump and his future cabinet secretaries on Friday evening at Mar-a-Lago.

The Prime Minister said, when he was talking about their concerns around, for example, fentanyl, precursor chemicals and drugs, that we have for a long time worried about illegal firearms being smuggled into Canada. The RCMP and the CBSA have talked to me about that.

We need to work with American partners. We made the point to him that it's something we want to do in partnership with them. The FBI and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection have a role to play. The CBSA, as I noted, has done some good work in that area, but again, we need to continue to lean in on that, because that particular issue is having devastating consequences for law enforcement officers and citizens in cities big and small across the country.

The conversation was very much that this is a bilateral and binational challenge. We talked about cocaine and methamphetamine that come into Canada from the United States. We wanted to impress upon the Americans that not only do we share their concerns, but we have our own as well.

• (1235)

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** I appreciate that.

I want to change the channel now to the adoption of Bill C-20.

It received royal assent on October 31. That legislation authorizes the establishment of a public complaints and review commission.

As you know, Minister, many Black, racialized and indigenous Canadians have had negative interactions with our police services. There have been negative interactions at the border. The call for such a commission has been a long time coming, let's just say. There's been a lot of interest in the establishment of this commission. It will give a lot of certainty when it starts being operationalized.

The coming into force is reliant on a Governor in Council announcement. I'd like you to inform this committee, Minister, of what steps you have taken as minister to operationalize its establishment.

I'd just like to be clear on what the timelines are, what the future budget projections are and when Canadians can expect this commission to be operationalized.

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** Mr. MacGregor, thank you for a very good question.

I was very happy when that legislation was adopted. You're right that it was a long time in the making. I was also encouraged by the support of the RCMP and the CBSA for that legislation to be adopted and to operationalize it quickly.

I sensed zero hesitancy from the leadership of the CBSA or the RCMP in recognizing that it was an important improvement for the reasons you stated, in terms of building public confidence in the good work that these agencies do and reassuring the groups of people that you—

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** When will the Governor in Council do the job?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** I have seen potential appointments. We do need to appoint people sensitive to the diversity that you identified, with the objective of providing that reassurance. The appointments we make, I hope, will be in some part an answer to that. I hope to go to cabinet soon with those names. I expect to bring that into effect very quickly.

We're not delaying. There's no reason to delay, other than finalizing the names and taking them before cabinet.

If the deputy has a more technical answer, perhaps she could provide that.

**The Chair:** Please answer very quickly.

**Ms. Tricia Geddes:** We are working on those really quickly. We understand the urgency here. It has been a long time coming. We're really keen to get these moved forward. As you pointed out, the operational agencies are equally excited to see this work done.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Parliament did its job.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

That concludes the first round. We'll move on to the second round with Ms. Dancho for five minutes.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Again, the priority, it seems, in addressing the 25% tariff threat from President-elect Trump is addressing what's happening in between the ports of entry right now.

You're nodding, so would you would agree? You nodded when I said that.

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** Of course that's a priority, but it's also a priority at the ports of entry. I see these as equal priorities. We take the operational advice of the RCMP and CSIS in terms of the location of the particular threat.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** It is a priority, though, between the ports of entry. We're not getting clear commitments from you for the re-deployment of RCMP resources or increased boots on the ground.

In fact, when Ms. Michaud said that we don't have enough CBSA agents, you said that you didn't agree with her. In that regard, is your opinion that we do, in fact, have enough CBSA agents? From that I can infer, there won't be an increase in CBSA agents' boots on the ground.

As you know, our leader, Pierre Poilievre, has committed to working with provincial law enforcement to re-deputize some of those individuals to secure the border in between the ports of entry and to expand the CBSA mandate to work between the ports as well.

We are committed to increasing those boots on the ground, but I'm not hearing that commitment from you, in particular in your response to Ms. Michaud. There is no commitment to increase boots on the ground at this time. It's certainly not before January 20, from what you've said.

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** Again, because you repeat it four or five times, Ms. Dancho, doesn't make it true. I also said to Madame Michaud that we were absolutely committed to increasing CBSA and RCMP personnel. We have taken considerable steps in that regard to reverse the cuts that your previous Conservative government made, but we also recognize we can do more. We'll do more as quickly as we can.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you, Minister.

I'm glad you brought up the issue of the cuts, because I was reviewing all the annual reports, back to the Martin years, if you would believe it. It would seem, just based on the annual report data itself, that during the 10 Harper years, there was an increase of 1,700 positions at the CBSA during his 10-year mandate and half a billion dollars of increased investments to the CBSA at that point. In fact, based on the annual report data, in the last year, we ensured there were 336 additional frontline workers.

We were looking at that same time, as you know, to balance the books. Harper eliminated the deficit at that time. We had a 26% decrease in violent crime, in contrast with your government's record, Minister, of a 50% increase in violent crime. We now have the largest debt accumulation in history. Actually, all governments combined before you don't match the debt that your government has accrued.

It is interesting that in the first two years of your government's mandate, at the CBSA you cut 237 frontline positions of border boots on the ground, and another 450 in 2020-21. In fact, you reduced, in 2017, the jobs at CBSA back to 2008 levels. It is interesting, given the balancing of the budget and the reduction of crime under the Harper government, that we're seeing quite the opposite from your record. I will certainly defend the Harper record seven days a week in that regard.

I do appreciate that you feel confident that you're bringing forward a plan. We haven't heard any commitment on the numbers. You were invited to Mar-a-Lago because you were doing a good job on the border. In fact, it's quite the opposite. Am I correct?

We are having serious issues at the border. We're not getting a sense from you that you're assuring that there will be redeployment of the RCMP immediately to secure the border, that you're increasing agents on the ground at the CBSA or that you're working with CBSA to expand its mandate. Again, it's not clear what your plan is.

You talked about technology. Fair enough; we agree in that regard. However, you have provided no concrete commitments. Really, for the Americans, they are not seeing anything before January 20 at this point. I find that concerning, given that we're staring down the barrel of a 25% tariff and economic recession by January 20.

I may be obsessed by talking about numbers and boots on the ground, but you have made no commitment on that. That is the issue the Americans are threatening us with.

I'll just ask you again: Is there an increase of boots on the ground for the RCMP and the CBSA in between ports of entry, yes or no?

• (1240)

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** Ms. Dancho, what is equally unclear is the infomercial you just did for social media.

You talked about Mr. Harper eliminating his own deficit, having inherited a massive surplus from Ralph Goodale. You talked about increasing the CBSA staff numbers, which is a good thing. The CBSA was born in 2003, post-9/11, so it wasn't surprising that after Mr. Harper became prime minister, the CBSA, in 2006, 2007 and 2008, began ramping up the good work it has been doing. Therefore, we certainly are glad that Mr. Harper did that in those early years. It's too bad that at the end of his government, he decided to cut it.

Again, Ms. Dancho, you keep repeating that. I hope you get a good clip, but I have said it publicly and I said it at Mar-a-Lago, and the Prime Minister repeated it: Of course we will be increasing the "boots on the ground", to use your phrase, of the CBSA and the RCMP.

I want to be careful. You said that the RCMP has not redeployed resources or has not assigned new people. I have a lot of confidence in the decision that the commissioner of the RCMP or that the president of the CBSA will make on reassigning the appropriate police or law enforcement presence, based on the threat that exists. I've been assured by the commissioner and by the president that they absolutely are operationally ready to meet a potential threat. The

good news is that we're going to work with them to ensure that they have even more human resources.

There's the specific answer to your question. The answer was yes, we are going to increase the human resources, but we're also going to use technologies, which can be very effective as well.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you very much.

Just in my remaining seconds, I have full confidence—

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Dancho. There's—

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** I have 15 seconds left.

**The Chair:** No, we're actually actually over by 45 seconds.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Yes, I do.

I have a point of order. When the mic went live, I had 15 seconds remaining, so if you'll just allow me—

**The Chair:** We're over. We're over by a minute.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** —and then the minister can finish. It's six minutes.

No, it's five minutes. You're right. I apologize.

Thank you to the commissioner and to the president. I do have full faith in you.

It's your leadership, Minister, that I'm concerned about.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. Damoff, you have five minutes.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Thank you so much.

Do I get five minutes and 45 seconds, too, Chair?

Minister, thank you for that last response.

I keep hearing things from my Conservative colleagues, and I would say that just because President-elect Trump says something doesn't necessarily make it true. That's why, in my opinion, your trip down there to make sure that the incoming administration knows the facts about the border was really important.

We've had conversations about the border during my whole time as an MP. I am personally really proud of the investments that we've made. All I heard about when we first came into office was the cuts that were made under DRAP, the deficit reduction action plan, across the board in government, but particularly in public safety, where you would think that the previous government would have made it a priority because they talk about public safety all the time, Minister.

We haven't talked about auto theft. The previous Harper government removed the scanner that was in Brampton to scan the containers at the intermodal terminal there, but our government convened a national summit on auto theft. At the time, when I asked Peel Regional Police Chief Nish what we could do, he said to do exactly this.

I wonder if you could talk a bit about the investments we've made to deal with auto theft and about the progress we're making on a really complicated issue.

• (1245)

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** Ms. Damoff, I thank you for that question, and I totally share your concern and the concerns of colleagues who have talked to me about the rising levels of auto theft over the last couple of years.

You're right that we convened a summit in Ottawa with law enforcement leaders from across the country and provincial and territorial ministers of public safety. I'm very happy that our colleagues from the larger provinces, Quebec and Ontario, where this is an issue, participated.

As I said in my opening remarks, the CBSA—obviously with partner police organizations—has done a lot of good work, based on the intelligence that they receive, and 2,000 stolen vehicles have already been retrieved this year. The national trends may show a decrease, we hope, of up to 17% in the first six months of 2024.

Nationally, in Quebec, for example, there's been a 36% decline in stolen vehicles. A decline from a high level is better than a continued increase, but it's certainly not where we want to get to, so I recognize that our work is not done in that regard, Ms. Damoff. We've made changes to the Criminal Code to provide additional tools for law enforcement and prosecutors to address auto theft. We've enhanced intelligence sharing and information sharing among municipal, provincial and federal law enforcement agencies.

The commissioner was recently at an Interpol meeting in Europe and has spoken to me about the very good work that the RCMP has done in terms of sharing information with Interpol and the number of foreign police checks at Interpol. He could, I'm sure, provide details for you in that regard.

On scanning technologies, I had an opportunity at an intermodal rail yard with some colleagues from Brampton to see a backscatter scanner.

Don't laugh, Commissioner. I think that's what it's called.

It's an RCMP scanner, and the RCMP lent it to the CBSA. There was an RCMP officer running the computer in it. This scanner can drive beside steel containers in an intermodal yard and look at two containers high. If they're marked tomato paste, but you see hubcaps and wheels like truck and car wheels, it doesn't look like tomato paste on the screen in the backscatter scanner.

There's a whole bunch of interesting technologies that will help intercept the stolen vehicles before they get to the port of Montreal. That's much more efficient and much less expensive, and it's much more reassuring for the person to get their vehicle back there, rather than finding it buried nine containers deep in one of the busiest ports in the country.

The president of the CBSA has some information on precise technologies that I'm sure will interest all of you.

**Ms. Erin O'Gorman:** I just want to say that we're testing those technologies at the rail yards and also looking at what we can do with intelligence. We're acting on every piece of intelligence we re-

ceive from police of jurisdiction and we're passing them back any piece of intelligence we can. All three of them are yielding some of the results that we're seeing now.

**The Chair:** That's great. Thank you.

Madame Michaud, go ahead for two minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, I raised this issue before you arrived. As you know, this Friday marks the sombre 35th anniversary of the Polytechnique massacre. You, your government and your predecessors promised victims and their families, including victims of acts committed with all other types of firearms, a ban on military-style assault weapons. That said, this ban isn't complete. In 2020, I believe, Bill Blair put in place an order in council that banned 1,500 weapons. Then came Bill C-21. However, the definition of "prohibited weapon" is ever-changing and applies only to weapons designed after the passage of the bill. As a result, a few hundred models remain in circulation.

In terms of the buyback program promised for this fall, or at least its first phase, people are worried that individuals may resell their prohibited weapon to the government and use that money to buy a similar model still in circulation. This would render the gun control measure ineffective and, above all, a waste of taxpayer money.

Like a number of people, I expect you to unveil the first phase of the buyback program soon. Can we expect a complete ban on military-style assault weapons before this buyback program takes effect?

• (1250)

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** Thank you for your question, Ms. Michaud.

I completely share the concerns that you just described. Along with my colleague, Jean-Yves Duclos, and others, I've been fortunate enough to meet with Nathalie Provost and Heidi Rathjen from PolySeSouvient on a number of occasions. I'm keenly aware of the sombre occasion that will be marked this Friday.

You're also right to say that we're committed to banning these weapons. The original order in council put in place by Mr. Blair banned over 1,500 types of weapons. I don't want to correct you. I just want to make sure that people understand what the first phase of the firearms buyback program entails. It involves collecting these prohibited military-style assault rifles from gun stores, such as Cabela's, that have them in stock. This process has already started. The RCMP has run pilot projects and tests. The government has already collected some of these rifles from retailers that had them in stock. The rifles have been destroyed. I've seen the photo of the first rifle destroyed after the first phase.

However, you're right. During the second phase, we'll be collecting these rifles from individuals. The Quebec provincial police will provide a great deal of support. We'll also be compensating these people, since we acknowledge that we're outlawing items that used to be legal. At that point, to avoid any loopholes, the next order in council rounding out the list of prohibited rifles will need to have been announced. When people receive a cheque, they won't have the option of returning to Cabela's to buy the modern version of the rifle that we just outlawed. We'll close that loophole before people receive the money.

Over the coming days, I'll have some comments to make about the next steps. We talked about a committee of experts or technical advisers who will work with the RCMP. This other process is already under way. This committee is in place and has already held meetings. I believe that it met last week.

I'm aware of the time frames that you referred to. I'm sure that we'll stick to them. I'll be providing more details in the coming days. I'm happy to keep you informed, since you have been supportive of our joint efforts. You, Mr. MacGregor and his predecessor, Mr. Julian, have played a key role.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

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

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, I had a very productive meeting with members of the Union of Canadian Correctional Officers in October, and previously, a couple of years ago, I had the opportunity to visit both the Mountain medium security facility and the Kent maximum security facility in British Columbia, so I've not only had an on-the-ground tour with members of USJE but I've also had these productive meetings with the union representing correctional officers.

I know from those tours that even little things, such as an increased quality of food, can have a dramatic effect on how the inmate population behaves, but I did hear a lot from both unions that there are some significant safety concerns. I know from the virtual reality experience that the UCCO put on that it is a unique working environment. For both inmates and the members of the public service who service those institutions, we want to make sure they have a safe working environment.

I did ask Ms. Kelly about this, but I want to stay focused just on you. Staff have some very real concerns about a safe working environment. They also have very real concerns about how their salary grid is being matched to other members, such as the RCMP.

What I'd like to know from you, Minister, is this: How are you personally advocating for the members of the USJE and UCCO in making sure that their demands are met, given the unique challenges of their workspace?

• (1255)

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** Mr. MacGregor, thank you for a thoughtful question.

I am happy to subscribe entirely to the comments you made in your preamble and as you posed the question in terms of the good work that members of both of these unions do in dangerous and difficult circumstances. I too saw the virtual reality presentation.

I have had the privilege of visiting these correctional institutions, not in your province yet—I hope to go in the coming weeks—but in many other parts of the country. In my constituency, I have the Dorchester Penitentiary, which opened in the 1880s, I think. Lawrence MacAulay was a backbench MP when that facility opened.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** I, as an opposition MP and as a government backbencher, would visit the Dorchester Penitentiary and Shepody Healing Centre every year to see the remarkable work being done by these remarkable women and men.

I've said it to the commissioner and I've said it to her colleagues every time I've had a chance to visit an institution. I totally share your concern. I have heard directly.... Every time I visit one of these institutions, Mr. MacGregor, I too take time to meet with the elected union representatives at every one of these institutions, and, in a separate meeting, meet with the management and the staff. Of course, I visit the institution, but I sit with the union representatives elected by those brave women and men who work there to hear their concerns.

Two weeks ago, I met the national representatives. The CSN and the UCCO were in collective agreement negotiating sessions.

I'm looking at the commissioner. I want to make sure.... I have good news. The President of the Treasury Board sent me a text on the weekend saying that they've arrived at an agreement in principle with the UCCO.

I don't know how much of this is public, but it is good news, because they had talked to me about their concerns on exactly the issue of where they are in relation to the RCMP salaries. I don't know the details of the agreement, but I was told that at the bargaining table, they have arrived at an agreement in principle.

The commissioner told me yesterday that there's still some more work to do. I may not have the right bureaucratic phrase. Is it “general agreement”?

It's a global agreement. I told her that was also a private jet that Bombardier made in Montreal, but I don't think that's it.

There's a global agreement, Mr. Chair, that the commissioner will hopefully finalize, so there is good news there, Mr. MacGregor.

I'll finish with this because I see the chair and I'm about to evacuate my chair here to go see the leaders of the opposition.

One thing that I think is important is that the women and men who work for the Correctional Service of Canada are in many ways the invisible partners. We talked a lot about the CBSA. We talked a lot about the RCMP. CSIS has to be invisible; that's their business. If they're too visible, it goes badly.

The people who work for the Correctional Service do remarkable work in some of the most difficult circumstances. I just wish Canadians like you and me could see this good work and appreciate the work they do to keep the country safe. I just wanted to say it publicly.

Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We have two minutes left. I can give a minute to Mr. Shipley and a minute....

**Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC):** One minute is very short.

Thank you for being here today.

Minister, after nine years, we've heard a lot in this committee lately about crime and chaos being up across Canada. We know there are issues going on. I'm hearing it from Canadians. We've heard about some horrific issues in this committee. Part of that is because of our lax enforcement and border controls.

Why did it take being called by the president-elect of the United States, who threatened to take you out to the woodshed, to get you to finally start talking about doing something about border control?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** Mr. Chair, it won't surprise you that I don't agree entirely with the premise of our colleague's question.

I thought I talked about the support that our government has given to the RCMP, the CBSA and border enforcement. A lot of it is in partnership with American colleagues. I think it takes nothing away from the obligation of the government to consider, at all times, what additional measures we can take to support this work that's done. In some cases, it's human resources. In some cases, it's technology.

I think we also have to be honest. When the incoming president of the United States threatens to put a 25% tariff on goods exported to the United States.... We saw a 10% tariff some years ago on the steel and aluminum sector of the Canadian economy and the pain point that it caused. This is a different order of magnitude.

A responsible government would, I hope, take every opportunity to show the incoming administration, as you noted in the question, how seriously it takes this issue and how it's prepared to step up in partnership with them. Four days after the president-elect's comments, we took it as a positive sign that we had dinner with him at his residence in Florida on the Friday of a holiday weekend, the U.S. Thanksgiving weekend.

• (1300)

**Mr. Doug Shipley:** Mr. Chair, do I still have time left? The answer has been a lot longer than the question.

**The Chair:** No, I'm sorry, Mr. Shipley. There was only a minute left. We will let the minister leave the committee because it is one o'clock.

I am informed that Mr. Morrice has a question. Is it a question for the officials?

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** That's correct, yes.

Minister, if you'd like to stay, you're welcome to answer it.

Commissioner Kelly, around half—

**The Chair:** I apologize, Mr. Morrice. You do need—

**Mr. Mike Morrice:** I believe there was one per side. They had their question, and this is the one being offered. The chair already gave one to this side and one to that side.

**The Chair:** I'm being told by the clerk that if there's a minute left, which there is for Mr. MacDonald, that time can be passed on to Mr. Morrice to ask the question.

**Mr. Mike Morrice:** It's their time. They're offering me their time.

**The Chair:** Mr. Morrice, you have a minute.

**Mr. Mike Morrice:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Commissioner, as you know, around half of those incarcerated in federal women's prisons are indigenous. The minister and I have spoken quite a bit about the indigenous community corrections initiative.

One of the organizations that applied for that funding is in my community. It's Healing of the Seven Generations. They applied back in July 2023 to provide a program for healing and support for incarcerated indigenous folks who are reintegrating into communities. They didn't hear back about their application until October of this year. The project was meant to start on January 1 of this year.

My question to you is this: What can be done through CSC and potentially through Public Safety Canada to provide more timely responses to organizations like Healing of the Seven Generations, which I think we can both agree are doing really important work?

**Ms. Anne Kelly:** I'm not aware.... I'll have to go back, look into it and get back to you on that.

**Mr. Mike Morrice:** I would appreciate that. I think we should do better for organizations like Healing of the Seven Generations, which waited 15 months for a response to their application.

Thank you.

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

Colleagues, I see that everyone's backing up, but we have to actually adopt the supplementary budgets.

I see Mr. MacGregor at the back. Can Mr. MacGregor and Mr. Motz come back?

Do I have unanimous consent to group the motions for the adoption of the votes for the supplementary estimates (B) 2024-25 referred to our committee?



**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

**The Chair:** It's on division.

CANADA BORDER SERVICES AGENCY

Vote 1b—Operating expenditures.....\$9,960,644

Vote 5b—Capital expenditures.....\$23,978,963

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

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Vote 1b—Program expenditures.....\$50,053,928

(Vote 1b agreed to on division)

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA

Vote 1b—Operating expenditures, grants and contributions.....\$489,611,180

Vote 5b—Capital expenditures.....\$17,244,248

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

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PREPARED-  
NESS

Vote 1b—Operating expenditures.....\$48,715,520

Vote 5b—Grants and contributions.....\$841,206,506

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

PAROLE BOARD OF CANADA

Vote 1b—Program expenditures.....\$1,384,858

(Vote 1b agreed to on division)

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Vote 1b—Operating expenditures.....\$371,640,529

Vote 5b—Capital expenditures.....\$138,808,100

Vote 10b—Grants and contributions.....\$37,433,666

Vote 15b—Payments in respect of disability and health benefits for members of  
the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.....\$7,222,776

(Votes 1b, 5b, 10b and 15b agreed to on division)

**The Chair:** Shall I report the votes to the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** That's great. Thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.





Published under the authority of the Speaker of  
the House of Commons

---

### SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

---

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the Copyright Act. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the Copyright Act.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

---

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <https://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité  
du Président de la Chambre des communes

---

### PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

---

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

---

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante :  
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>