



BCMPPA Submission to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security on Bill C-7

Good morning honorable members of the Parliamentary Committee, Chair, my name is Brendan McKenna and I am a the spokesman for the British Columbia Mounted Police Professional Association (BCMPPA) and the co spokesman for the Mounted Police Professional Association of Canada (MPPAC).

I have been involved in the Association movement for 22 year. I am a founding member of both the BCMPPA (1994) and MPPAC (2010). The BCMPPA is a non-profit provincial police association that is the provincial arm of MPPAC. I spent 30 years with the RCMP, all in British Columbia, working primarily on detachment, including the largest detachment in the country, in both medium-sized and small detachments in the north, and provided relief in a 3 person isolated post when the nearest assistance was more than a 2 hour drive, so I bring a broad perspective to bear.

I will begin by speaking and sharing my concerns regarding the lack of core components found in C-7, and I will focus primarily on 2 areas, Staffing Levels and Equipment. These 2 areas have a direct impact upon the Occupational Health and Safety of front-line police officers. They have a direct impact on the quality of work environment. Front-line officers who are over-tasked, inadequately resourced and under-equipped cannot reasonably be expected to consistently deliver the high-quality service that the job demands, and that Canadians expect.

We are being compared to civil servants under the PSLRA. From the survey that was conducted by the previous government of over 9000 RCMP members they wanted to have their own piece of legislation created for them and thus bill C-7. We know that the Liberal government is committed to ensuring the SCC decision is complied with but we are concerned that this bill misses the mark.

Bill C-7 as written does not fully meet the spirit and intent of the SCC decision that provides the right of collective bargaining to the RCMP. I submit that the Court's intention was to clarify that RCMP members should be accorded the same rights and privileges as all other Canadians, and Canadian police colleagues in the various municipal, provincial and federal agencies. The restrictions contained within C-7 would be akin to guaranteeing a person the right to vote, and then limiting the placement of voting polls to locations which cannot be accessed, essentially vitiating that right. Those restrictions within C-7 as currently written, unless amended, preclude

RCMP front-line membership from having effective and meaningful input into two areas critical to Occupational Health and Safety.

This is because bill C-7 misses many of the key fundamental elements found in collective bargaining in other agencies that enshrine organize labour in Canada.

Minimum Staffing Provisions in Police Collective Agreements

There are several police associations around the country which have collective agreement provisions regarding minimum staffing levels, including the Toronto Police Association, Windsor Police Association, Sudbury Police Association, Windsor Police Association, Durham Regional Police Association, to name a few.

Anecdotally, I can provide my own experience in front-line operations. Our detachments are generally under-resourced. There are a variety of reasons for this. I believe the primary reason is because those individuals on the pointy end of the stick have no input. Contracts are negotiated between the federal government and either provinces or municipalities. Fiscal considerations appear to be the prime motivator. Policing is expensive, and for many municipalities, it is the single biggest budget item, so it is understandable that they would want to control costs to the extent possible. However, this has resulted in the chronic under-staffing at detachments across the country, essentially leaving it up to the members on the ground to carry the burden.

In 2009, I was recruited to work at our provincial headquarters in British Columbia. The position was leading a unit which focused on police resourcing at detachments around the province. One of the goals was to review each detachment around the province every 5 years to ensure that they were adequately resourced for front-line service delivery. Prior to my arrival, the unit had just completed study which identified that one Vancouver Island detachment was so under-resourced that it required 26 additional front-line members to address the gap.

This Client Services unit was supposed to include 2 NCO's to analyze data, prepare and present the findings and 5 public servants to mine and gather the data from computer-based record systems. Only one of the five public servants ever happened. The other positions were blocked, and the funding re-allocated to another project. So, it was a notable irony that the unit responsible to ensure detachments were adequately resourced was itself so under-resourced that it could not meet its mandate. Had there been a collective agreement in place with provisions to ensure minimum staffing levels, it is unlikely that this situation would have been allowed to occur.