

BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK

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Senators call for 'zero tolerance' on harassment



Jun 18 2013

OTTAWA - The RCMP should amend its code of conduct to explicitly define and prohibit harassment, a Senate committee recommends.

In a newly tabled report, the senators said Tuesday that spelling out the prohibition in direct language would avoid ambiguity.

"Prohibiting harassment in a regulation conveys the seriousness accorded to this issue by the RCMP's senior leadership," said the report of the Senate committee on national security and defence.

Currently the behaviour is dealt with in the code under the umbrella of disgraceful conduct.

Several RCMP officers have complained of abusive behaviour, bullying and intimidation since Cpl. Catherine Galliford went public in 2011 with allegations of harassment.

While there is no concrete statistical proof of a systemic or rampant problem of harassment in the RCMP, even a few cases of harassment can "poison any work environment," said the report.

"In the end, one of the most important issues facing the RCMP is trust. Immediate, meaningful steps must be taken to enhance the public's trust in the force, and bolster members' trust in the disciplinary systems designed

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to protect them.”

In many ways, the report echoed the findings of an earlier study by the independent watchdog over the RCMP.

The Senate committee recommended a zero tolerance policy against harassment within the national police force.

“Sanctions for contraventions of the Code of Conduct must be timely, proportionate, predictable and applied consistently throughout the RCMP regardless of rank and insignia,” said the report.

The senators said promotion within the Mounties must take into consideration violations of the code, including past incidents of harassment.

The report noted there have been instances where a member “found to have engaged in repeated instances of sexual misconduct” was transferred to an unsuspecting division. Senators also heard stories of victims of harassment being removed from their units to protect them from recrimination.

“Neither of these scenarios is acceptable because neither addresses the underlying issues effectively.”

The committee encouraged leaders to look to the experience of the Canadian military in grappling with similar problems in the recent past.

Legislation awaiting royal assent gives the RCMP commissioner authority to establish a new process for the investigation and resolution of harassment complaints.

The sections of the bill that apply to harassment must be implemented as soon as possible, the Senate committee report said.

It also called on the government to consider creating a position of RCMP ombudsman.

WEDNESDAY JUNE 12, 2013

Jun 12 2013

FREDERICTON - The first woman ever to be named chief of a municipal police force in Atlantic Canada is settling into her new permanent role.

Leanne Fitch is a 27-year veteran of the Fredericton Police Force. She had been serving as the department’s acting police chief for the last 11 months.

“It is a historic occasion for our city,” said Fitch. “I’m very proud of my city and council that saw fit to give me this opportunity going forward.”

Fitch, who was officially named chief this week, also holds the title of being the region’s first female deputy chief for a municipal police force.

By the time she joined the city’s police force in 1986 as a park patrol officer, Fitch was only the fifth woman to ever have been an officer in Fredericton.

“I do have lots of stories of what it was like as a young patrol constable out there on the street, being this small girl who would arrive on calls, and the challenges I faced early on in being taken seriously,” she said.

Fitch joins seven other women across Canada currently serving as chief of a municipal police force.

She’s only the 12th woman ever to be named to that role in Canadian history.

The new police chief says one of her top priorities will be to address union complaints of low staff morale.

Fitch also says the city’s police force is relatively fresh-faced, with about 50 per cent of officers only joining in the last few years.

“I think one of my number one goals is to work very closely with the employees to develop some succession planning,” she said. “To develop knowledge base in the organization so that down the road there are plenty of good people who can step into those leadership roles and continue policing our city.”

(CTV News)

THURSDAY JUNE 13, 2013

Jun 13 2013

VANCOUVER - British Columbia’s controversial drinking and driving laws reduced the number of deaths from alcohol-related crashes by more than 40 per cent two years after they were implemented, a new study suggests.

Research from the University of Victoria said an estimated 104 lives were saved after the laws were introduced in September

2010, there was a 23-per-cent reduction in the number of injuries, and property damage was slashed by nearly 20 per cent.

Lead study author Scott Macdonald, from the university’s Centre for Addiction Research, said B.C. is the only province in Canada that has immediate consequences for drivers with blood alcohol levels of higher than .05 per cent, below the Criminal Code threshold of .08 per cent.

Macdonald said other provinces and territories should have similar legislation to B.C., where immediate sanctions have largely replaced the Criminal Code, which had more severe penalties but a lower probability of punishment.

“The problem with the Criminal Code is that it’s very time consuming to convict somebody,” he said. “You’re not criminally charged and it’s much more efficient for the officers.”

Macdonald said that unlike the old provincial laws, the current legislation requires much less paperwork and uses evidence gathered by police at the roadside with a portable handheld breathalyzer device.

The study, which compared statistics from the 15-year period before and two-year period after the implementation of the legislation, was published in the online journal Accident Analysis and Prevention and is co-authored by researchers at the University of B.C.

It said the 68 per cent reduction in Criminal Code charges for drinking amounts to a partial decriminalization of impaired driving in B.C.

The law gives police the power to issue impaired drivers on-the-spot driving prohibitions ranging from three days to 90 days, depending on how much they drank, their vehicle can be impounded for up to a month and they are fined up to \$500.

In November 2011, the B.C. Supreme Court upheld the legislation but ruled parts of the law infringed the charter.

The court ruled people accused of impaired driving are deprived of their right to appeal sanctions such as being required to install an ignition-lock device that prevents drunk drivers from starting a vehicle, and enrolling in a remedial program.

The B.C. government introduced amended laws in June 2012 and police were then required to tell drivers they have the right to another breath test on a second screening device, with the lower of the two readings prevailing.

In March, the B.C. Court of Appeal put off a review of the provincial law, which was challenged by several drivers.

Andrew Murie, chief executive officer of MADD Canada, said in a statement that once B.C. figures out its legal challenges surrounding the legislation, its laws could become the “golden template” for the rest of Canada.

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Jun 13 2013

REGINA - The Mounties are defending their hiring practices this week after newly released numbers showed there are less than 400 cadets enrolled at the Depot training division in Regina this year.

That's the lowest that number has been in at least a decade and a far cry from the nearly 1,800 enrolled just four years ago.

But chief superintendent Garry Jay says it isn't an accident.

He says every year the senior executives of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police crunch a series of numbers to determine exactly how many new officers will be needed.

The factors considered include the variety of clients the RCMP provides officers for, such as the municipal and provincial policing contracts as well as national policing responsibilities.

Jay says how many officers retire in a given year also plays a part, as do budget levels provided by the federal government.

"It's always a balance," he told radio station CJME in an interview Thursday. "We have to function in a political reality, but we try to carry on business in that environment."

He said there have been budgetary issues as a result of budget cuts from provincial and municipal partners, as well as the service's contribution as a government department to the federal deficit reduction plan.

"So as a result of that we had to re-evaluate how many cadets we needed for this current year," he said.

"That evaluation also took into account the fact that we've done some structural reorganization, a reorganization of our federal policing programs, and we've also looked at whether we need to have regular member police officers in administrative positions or whether those individuals would be better situated in front-line police functions."

But he also said the trend is reversing and a surge in demand for officers from municipal and provincial partners means they'll be looking to have about a thousand cadets in the next group.

"That's a general average (over the last 10 years). There have been some highs and lows."

Jay said that in order to find 1,000 viable candidates, the RCMP will have to interview roughly 10,000 applicants.

(CJME)

Jun 13 2013

VANCOUVER - When big crime breaks in the city, Vancouver police typically establish a makeshift command centre wherever they can — living rooms, fire halls, libraries.

But with a sleek new \$800,000 truck, that's all about to change.

Vancouver police have unveiled the force's first mobile command centre, a



high-tech vehicle that will act as a roadside headquarters for the force.

"It's literally an office on wheels," said police Chief Jim Chu at a Thursday announcement in Stanley Park.

The truck, which will hit Vancouver streets in three to four weeks, will be deployed about 225 days of the year. It will provide police with an on-the-scene base at homicide investigations, natural disasters and large public events.

On the outside, the mobile command centre appears to be an ordinary black police truck. But inside, the vehicle is equipped with seven computers, a touch screen television and other state-of-the-art bells and whistles.

A camera positioned atop a 12-metre pole can provide a sightline from as far as five kilometres away, giving police a particular edge during missing person investigations. The camera's feed is sent inside the truck and can be broadcast live to police headquarters.

The mobile command centre won't have its own dedicated team, but will be used by police officers across the force.

"This will really enhance the ability of the Vancouver Police Department to keep our city safe," Chief Chu said. "Now commanders will be able to coordinate the efforts of everyone."

The truck's grand unveiling came two days before the two-year anniversary of the Stanley Cup riot, a dark blot in the city's history.

According to police Superintendent Daryl Wiebe, the new truck will help police quell future riots from spiralling out of control.

"If the crowd is moving down Granville Street, we can look on the camera and see them throwing Molotov cocktails and flipping cars," Wiebe said, gesturing to a monitor on the wall beside him. "It'll inform my deployment."

While police recommendations written in response to the riot included improving command centres, the high-tech truck was already in the works, Wiebe said.

It's a big step up from the days of "commandeering" public spaces for command posts, Wiebe said.

"We would bring in laptops, our radios, flip charts, Post-it notes. It was very old-school. Very officey," he said.

With sleek aluminum walls, a white board and even a printer, the mobile command centre still has a certain office vibe, albeit modernized.

In Wiebe's mind, the high-tech ride can be

summed up with a single word.

"Yeah, it's cool," he said.

(The Province)



Jun 14 2013

TORONTO - A Toronto judge has sent a strong message to police about the consequences of violating the public trust, sentencing Det.-Const. Mandip Sandhu to 15 months in jail and two years' probation for sexually assaulting a masseuse.

Sandhu was convicted in February of forcing a 44-year-old masseuse to perform oral sex on him while he was supposedly inspecting a North York spa.

Provincial Court Justice John Moore called the crime a "breach of trust" committed by an individual "who [pledged] to uphold the law."

"Mr. Sandhu should have known that severe consequences would flow from his conduct. Other police officers need to know," Moore said during sentencing Friday.

"The public has to trust that the court will do its part to ensure offences like this won't happen again," he said.

The maximum sentence for the offence is 18 months in jail when tried summarily.

The officer from 31 Division was suspended with pay when charges were laid. At sentencing, the defence said he would be suspended without pay.

Toronto police would not comment on the case, or say whether Sandhu would lose his job.

Sandhu was also ordered to seek counselling as directed, and was prohibited from owning weapons or contacting the victim, whose identity is protected by a publication ban. His name will be added to the registry of sex offenders.

(Toronto Star)

Jun 14 2013

TORONTO - Police say a violent gang which was terrorizing a northwest Toronto neighbourhood has been dismantled following a series of raids targeting suspected drug and gun traffickers.

Police say their raids seized dozens of firearms, most of which came into the country from the United States.

The total number of people arrested in the investigation now stands at 48.

Staff Supt. Jim Ramer says 300 assorted serious offences charges, including murder and participation in a criminal organization - have been laid.

Jun 14 2013

VERNON, B.C. - Mounties in Vernon, B.C., are acting quickly against an

officer accused of possessing child pornography.

Const. Ryan Hampton appeared in a Vernon courtroom Thursday and has been ordered to return June 27 to face charges of possession of child pornography, obstructing a police investigation and breaching conditions.

Chief Supt. Mike Sekela says the matter is "absolutely deplorable" and the force has filed a notice of intention to have Hampton suspended without pay.

He also says a formal disciplinary hearing will be held and the Mounties will seek the dismissal of the officer, who is in his mid-30s.

The allegations against Hampton surfaced May 5.

Sekela says criminal and internal investigations began immediately.

(CKFR, CKIZ)

Jun 14 2013

MONTREAL - The wife of Canada's former spy watchdog has been arraigned in Montreal for allegedly helping her husband launder millions of dollars.

Pamela Porter did not enter a plea in a brief court appearance today and will return to court Monday to have a date set for her bail hearing.

Arthur Porter's wife will be detained over the weekend and the Crown will oppose bail because it believes she is a flight risk.

Pamela Porter faces one charge of conspiracy as well as another related to laundering more than \$22 million.

Arthur Porter remains in a Panamanian prison and is fighting his extradition to Canada on the grounds his arrest was illegal because he has diplomatic immunity.

The former head of the Security Intelligence Review Committee faces several charges related to alleged scams in the awarding of a \$1.3-billion Montreal hospital contract. He says he's done nothing wrong.

SATURDAY
JUNE 15, 2013

Jun 15 2013

SURREY, B.C. - B.C.'s independent police watchdog has launched investigations into two separate incidents involving the death of one man and serious injuries suffered by another.

The Independent Investigations Office says that in Victoria, a male driver trying to flee from police died at about 2:30 a.m. Saturday after his vehicle struck a lamp standard.

Victoria Police say the officer was trying to stop the speeding driver and had activated his emergency equipment but ended the chase about 30 seconds before the crash.

The IIO says prior to that, at about 12:30 a.m., a pair of RCMP officers travelling

in separate vehicles in Maple Ridge saw a young man on the road and that while the first cruiser passed by, the second one struck him.

The youth suffered serious injuries and was transported to hospital.

Independent investigators were deployed to the scene in each incident.

SUNDAY
JUNE 16, 2013

Jun 16 2013

MONTREAL - Three men in their 60s face charges after police cracked an alleged plan to rob at least one armoured truck and had to destroy a possible bomb found in a Montreal apartment.

Police arrested the trio, aged 62, 63 and 65, on Friday and the suspects are expected to appear in court on Monday.

It was the first link of a chain of events that would end with a controlled explosion in a working-class neighbourhood early Sunday.

The device was found in a building where a number of retired and semi-retired tenants reportedly live.

Montreal police spokesman Const. Daniel Lacoursiere says that robbery squad detectives in the force's Major Crimes Division had been investigating word of a possible heist for the last four months.

The urgency of the probe ramped up recently when they got a tip.

MONDAY
JUNE 17, 2013

Jun 17 2013

Search and mobile superpower Google is working on new technology that would effectively purge all images of child pornography and abuse from most of the web.

Google disclosed new efforts to fight online child exploitation in a blog post Saturday. The company committed \$5 million to "eradicate child abuse imagery online" and started a \$2 million Child Protection Technology Fund to encourage the development of better tools to destroy child porn.

While money being allocated to the cause is important, the technology Google is building to combat child porn is even more so. Google is working on a new database of flagged images of child porn and abuse that can be shared with other search engines and child protection organizations. The database will help create systems that automatically eliminate that sort of content.

"Recently, we've started working to incorporate encrypted 'fingerprints' of child sexual abuse images into a cross-industry database,"

Jacqueline Fuller, Director of Google Giving, wrote in the blog post. "This will enable companies, law enforcement, and charities to better collaborate on detecting and removing these images, and to take action against the criminals."

If the database is used effectively, any flagged image in the database would not be searchable through participating search engines or web hosting providers. And maybe best of all, computers will automatically flag and remove these images without any human needing to see them.

Google hopes the new database is operational in less than a year, according to The Telegraph.

"This announcement is inspiring for those who are at the forefront of tackling child sexual abuse content," Susie Hargreaves, chief executive officer of the Internet Watch Foundation, told The Telegraph. "We know that the best way to tackle what is some of the most horrific content online is by working with others from all over the world to combat this on a global platform."

(VentureBeat.com)

Jun 17 2013

TORONTO - Canada is joining a group fighting online child sexual abuse around the world, Justice Minister Rob Nicholson said Monday, calling it the next step in the government's crackdown on child sex predators.

The Global Alliance Against Child Sexual Abuse Online, which includes the United States, the European Union and other countries, was started last December to help authorities better identify and assist victims of abuse and prosecute culprits.

The international nature of online abuse requires co-operation between countries to bring criminals to justice and rescue victims, Nicholson said.

While much is already being done to combat child sex abuse on Canadian soil, working closely with investigators abroad is a necessity given that child pornography rings often span several countries, he added.

"This is just a recognition of what is taking place on the Internet," the minister said at a news conference in Toronto.

"What this will do is formalize with a whole new range of countries with the intention to share information and to co-operate with each other in these investigations."

The alliance also wants to raise global awareness of the scope of the problem.

In Canada, sexual violations against children - including instances of online luring - were among the few types of violent crime to rise between 2010 and 2011, according to the latest data provided by Statistics Canada.

Increasingly sophisticated technology makes it easier for predators to obtain pornographic material - and to keep their activities

underground, said Det.-Sgt. Kim Gross, who heads Toronto police's child exploitation investigations unit.

Those who work in that field already trade tips, techniques and other information to keep up with the evolving methods abusers use to hide their tracks, she said.

But cementing those networks will help investigators take action more quickly in cases where a child may be in danger of being harmed, she added.

"Often when we're talking about children who are young and vulnerable, you may want to act faster than normal because you certainly want to protect that child," she said.

Monday's announcement comes months after the Conservative government vowed to stiffen penalties for sex predators who prey on children and give victims a formal role in the country's criminal justice system.

Nicholson also made a series of funding announcements in the last week of January geared toward child-assault victims.

Jun 17 2013

EDMONTON - Police chiefs in Alberta want the provincial government to toughen up its traffic laws.

They have voted in favour of a resolution that would allow officers to seize vehicles of drivers caught going more than 50 kilometres per hour over the speed limit.

It would also give officers the authority to suspend drivers' licences - both of which would last one week.

Edmonton police chief Rod Knecht says there's too many people being killed on the highways and it's due to people driving 160-170 km/h and even 200 km/h.

The chiefs don't want it to be a mandatory seizure; they want police to have the ability to use their discretion when seizing the vehicle.

Knecht says that would accommodate circumstances such as a woman in labour with a complication.

"We just don't want to see people killed," said Knecht, who is head of the Alberta Chiefs of Police.

The vote was not unanimous because in some rural areas, worries about access to tow trucks was an issue.

The chiefs approved a similar motion in 2009, but the province turned it down.

Justice Minister Jonathan Denis said Monday there's no hard proof it would work.

"We simply haven't seen any evidence to suggest that these additional seizure powers that are being advocated would actually have a measured impact on these high-speed drivers," Denis said.

According to the B.C. Ministry of Justice, since its policy went into effect in 2010, the number of fatal and injury-related crashes was cut in half compared to the previous five-year period.

Denis said just because B.C. is doing it,

doesn't mean we have to and in certain situations, Alberta police do have the power to take your vehicle.

"Careless driving, it also talks about if there's been things like a street race, or a bet or wager, that the officer has that particular power," he said.

(CHED, CFFR, The Canadian Press)

Jun 17 2013

SASKATOON - A Manitoba police officer has been seriously injured and a police dog had to be euthanized after a two-vehicle crash north of Saskatoon.

The crash between a pickup truck and a Manitoba RCMP police dog unit happened Friday night north of Saskatoon on Highway 16.

The RCMP dog handler had to be cut out of the vehicle and was taken to a Saskatoon hospital with serious injuries.

The driver of the pickup was also taken to hospital, but police did not have any information on his condition.

There were two police service dogs in the vehicle, and both were taken to Saskatoon University Veterinary Emergency Unit for treatment.

One had minor injuries, but the other had more severe injuries and had to be euthanized.

Jun 17 2013

ABBOTSFORD, B.C. - The chief constable in Abbotsford, B.C., has asked the province's police watchdog to investigate allegations that officers pepper sprayed homeless individuals and damaged their tents.

Police in the Fraser Valley city says the allegations were made during the meeting of a local social-development advisory group last week.

Concerned about the allegations, Chief Const. Bob Rich has asked the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner to investigate the issue.

The department says it does not authorize or approve of its officers damaging personal property.

Civilian investigators will determine the complaint's validity, and police say, if necessary, hold any officers involved to account.

The issue of homelessness in the Fraser Valley arose recently when city workers dumped chicken manure on a homeless camp and were then forced to clean it up amidst a public outcry.

Jun 17 2013

An RCMP dog had to be put down and its handler is in hospital with serious injuries after a crash just north of Saskatoon.

Police say the unmarked RCMP SUV from Manitoba was involved in a collision with a pickup truck at the intersection of Highway 16 and 71st Street just after 6 p.m. Friday.

The driver of the other vehicle was also



to hospital, but there's no word on the extent of his injuries.

Another police dog suffered only minor injuries.

The crash remains under investigation.

Meanwhile, a second collision involving a RCMP vehicle saw six people injured when an officer responding to a call collided with a vehicle at an intersection in Warman Saturday night.

A RCMP news release says the vehicle of an officer responding to a gun call collided with a van at a four-way stop at the intersection of Central Drive and Sixth Avenue just after 10 p.m.

Five occupants of the van - one male, one female adult and three children - were taken to hospital and later released after suffering minor injuries. The officer involved was treated on scene.

The RCMP says the police vehicle's lights were activated at the time of the crash.

(CTV News)

Jun 17 2013

MONTREAL — Three members of the Montreal police force, including two high-ranking officers, have been suspended without pay following an investigation by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Inspector Jimmy Cacchione, who runs the police unit at Trudeau airport, Chief Inspector Giovanni Di Feo, who works in the force's west region, and Detective Tony Bianco, who also works at the airport, were all suspended on Monday.

Commander Antonio Iannantuoni, a senior officer in the force's organized crime division, has been reassigned.

Montreal police are conducting a criminal investigation against the officers, who are suspected of interfering with the judicial system, said Commander Ian Lafrenière, head of the force's media relations division.

"It has nothing to do with the work at the airport," he said.

He couldn't say whether criminal charges will be filed against the officers.

A separate RCMP investigation is partly linked to a contract given to the now-bankrupt security firm BCIA, which provided security for years at Montreal police headquarters on St. Urbain St., allegedly without a proper bidding process.

Luigi Coretti, BCIA's former owner, was arrested in June 2012 and charged with fraud over

\$5,000, making false statements and producing fake documents in connection with an alleged scam involving a police-run credit union.

One of the officers suspended on Monday is Coretti's brother-in-law.

Coretti is also a close friend of former Liberal cabinet minister Tony Tomassi. Their relationship landed Tomassi in hot water after it was discovered that he allegedly used a credit card given to him by Coretti's company during his tenure in the National Assembly. Tomassi is facing charges of fraud and breach of trust.

(Montreal Gazette)

TUESDAY JUNE 18, 2013

Jun 18 2013

EDMONTON - Police say quick reaction from the public allowed officers to quickly locate a mother and nine-month-old baby girl who were the subjects of an Amber Alert.

Det. Cam Hawrish said Edmonton police received a tip that helped them locate the woman and child within about two hours of the alert being issued Tuesday morning.

"Shortly after one o'clock we got a phone call from a citizen," Hawrish said. "The two subjects that were listed as missing have been located and they're safe."

Police had been concerned that the mother was planning to leave Canada with the baby and return to China.

They said the woman had a stroller, baby supplies and a large suitcase with her.

Officers had originally responded to a report of an alleged abduction Monday night around 7:45 p.m.

Jun 18 2013

BLACK DIAMOND, Alta. - He was dryed off his freshly washed car.

That's what the Alberta man told Mounties when they stopped him doing 180 kilometres per hour south on Highway 22 south of Black Diamond, Alta.

The driver, a 67-year-old who lives in the area, was in court Monday.

RCMP say the judge fined the man \$800 and suspended him from driving for 45 days.

WEDNESDAY JUNE 19, 2013

Jun 19 2013

MONTREAL - The search is on for another mayor after Montreal has had its second mayoral resignation in less than a year.

Interim mayor Michael Applebaum, who

is facing 14 charges including fraud and corruption, says he's innocent of the accusations.

And while announcing he was stepping down, he also declared that he will work to prove his innocence.

Jean-Francois Lisee, the Quebec minister responsible for the Montreal region, has a message for other politicians.

He says they are wrong if they believe they can have a career with skeletons in their closets.

The city will soon have its third mayor in the current term. A vote at Montreal city council is expected next week to pick the person who will hold office until the November municipal election.

Laurent Blanchard, the city's executive committee chairman, is a potential contender for the interim job.

Applebaum became interim mayor in a vote at council last November, after offering to build a multi-party coalition to root out corruption.

Jun 19 2013

MONTREAL - After a spring of sleaze, Quebec's Charbonneau inquiry is taking a break for the summer.



While the inquiry will continue to conduct investigations and prepare for the fall session, the public testimony is done until after Labour Day.

A former Laval municipal official Friday was the last witness of a spring session that put a dent in Quebec's political and business class.

The inquiry has tackled everything from illegal political party financing, to engineering firms colluding on contracts, to organized crime's tentacles in the industry.

It has heard from 80 witnesses - engineering executives, city councillors, mayors, construction bosses, city officials and others.

Some witnesses described in detail so-called "turnkey" municipal election campaigns that

made a mockery of Quebec's strict electoral laws. Engineering companies provided the money, manpower, and logistical support for a local campaign - and expected to cash in when their municipal candidate won.

Others described how municipal employees were routinely bought off to ensure that contract selection committees made favourable decisions.

At the provincial level, engineering firms pumped cash into political parties through middlemen, despite laws banning corporate donations. One former engineering exec explained that he did it to get the ear of politicians who controlled infrastructure grants.

Another suggested the practice also went on at the federal level, although the inquiry is not examining federal politics.

Meanwhile, the cost of projects skyrocketed through collusion and false-billing. While taxpayers got soaked, illicit profits were shared by companies, crooked bureaucrats, political parties, and elements of organized crime who threatened anyone hindering the collusive system.

Chief counsel Sonia LeBel said there was more to come.

"We have not completed our work," LeBel said. "On March 19th, knowing that our mandate was gigantic, the government gave us an extension to complete our work."

The inquiry requested and received an 18-month extension from the provincial government and must now submit its final report by spring 2015.

The inquiry will be required to submit a progress report by Jan. 31, 2014.

Jun 19 2013

EDMONTON - Edmonton police dedicated a traditional teepee in the river valley Wednesday.

The ceremony was part of a new strategy designed to foster cultural awareness within the police service, and many aboriginal people are hopeful for change.

Many blame racism for their mistreatment in the past — but now hope to build a new relationship with the Edmonton Police Service.

Former EPS employee Kathleen Sawdo said Wednesday's ceremony was a desperately needed first step to repair the

relationship between aboriginal Edmontonians and the city's police force.

Sawdo, who used to work as an administrator for the victim services unit, said the need for cultural awareness within the police force is obvious.

"I was told to be less aboriginal at work," said Sawdo.

Among the things that her colleagues said were "inappropriate": earrings, her habit of keeping sweetgrass at her desk, saying "thank you" in her native language and displaying pictures of her children.

"I had finally come to the place where you're supposed to be proud and you feel proud of who you are and where you come from," said Sawdo, "and that made me feel like I shouldn't be again and I felt like a dirty little Indian kid again."

Sawdo said she was promised that her unit would receive aboriginal-awareness training — but that police reneged on the promise.

"Their internal process obviously doesn't work. They can promise things and still get away with it — and that's not right."

Sawdo eventually quit her job, and later won a judgement against EPS through the Alberta Human Rights Commission.

She said she's hopeful the tepee dedication means real change is coming.

"I still have hope, but I'm skeptical."

Police Chief Rod Knecht said the ceremony was more than just a symbol.

"There's always ways to do things better. I think, historically, we could have done things different — we could have done things better. We don't always understand."

But now, he says, that is beginning to change.

"This is a great first step," he said. "It's tangible, something we can see, something we can feel, and I think it will bring the community together — the Edmonton Police Service and the aboriginal community."

(CBC News)

THURSDAY
JUNE 20, 2013

Jun 20 2013

VANCOUVER - Three witnesses have testified about what they saw at the trial of a Mountie accused of lying at the public inquiry into Robert Dziekanski's death at Vancouver's airport in October 2007.

Constable Bill Bentley is charged with perjury for his testimony at hearings that examined the circumstances of the Polish immigrant's death after he was Tasered.

The Crown has alleged Bentley intentionally misled homicide investigators and recorded inaccurate information in his notes, and then lied at the inquiry to cover

up his dishonesty.

Three witnesses, who saw the confrontation, testified yesterday.

Each gave statements to police in the hours after the incident that painted Dziekanski as an aggressive man.

But yesterday's testimony showed the witnesses made their own mistakes when they first attempted to describe what they saw.

Jun 20 2013

OTTAWA - An Ottawa-based Ontario Provincial Police officer has been charged with child-luring.

After relatives of the victim complained to police in December 2012, the OPP launched an investigation into the alleged offence, which occurred between Sept. 22 through Dec. 3 of that year.

Cst. Michael Janho, 31, was arrested and charged Wednesday. Janho was off-duty at the time of the offence, according to an OPP release, and has been suspended from duty with pay as per the Police Services Act.

Janho, a Kanata resident, has served five years with the OPP, and has been posted to the Ottawa detachment throughout that time.

He was released on a promise to appear and officer-in-charge undertaking with conditions, and will appear in the Ontario Court of Justice in Ottawa on July 9.

(Ottawa Citizen)

Jun 20 2013

MONTREAL - Métro crime has steadily decreased since Montreal police started patrolling the subway network six years ago this week, with the number of criminal infractions dropping by 14 per cent in 2012.

To highlight the improvements, the police department is working on a statistical analysis of the past six years to be made public this fall.

That report may include, for the first time, a limited amount of information about the number and types of crimes being committed at particular métro stations.

This would be a shift in policy for Montreal police, who for the past three years have fought an attempt by The Gazette to get station-by-station subway crime statistics.

On June 18, 2007, a dedicated métro squad, now numbering 134 police officers, was put in place, supplementing the Société de transport de Montréal's 50 security guards.

Before that, officers from local police stations were sometimes present in the métro network, Inspector Roger Bélair, who took over as head of the métro squad in April, said in an interview Wednesday.

"What changed in 2007 was we started having a constant presence," he said. "Now we have officers dedicated to patrolling the métro — they're in the stations, on the platforms."

By increasing police visibility, "we're making

it harder for people to commit crimes."

In 2012, there was a dramatic drop in the number of thefts and robberies (theft with violence or threat of violence) reported in the métro system, recently released police statistics show.

Bélair credited a concerted effort to prevent the pilfering of electronic devices such as smartphones and tablet computers. Transit users were given tips on preventing such crimes and encouraged to report incidents so police could better target stations favoured by electronics thieves.

Jun 20 2013

HALIFAX - Sam Saade has resigned as a constable with Halifax Regional Police as part of an agreement with the Crown that allows him to avoid prosecution in a witness-tampering case.

The Crown fulfilled its end of the deal Thursday in Nova Scotia Supreme Court in Halifax, withdrawing charges of breach of trust, intimidating a justice system participant and uttering threats.

Saade, 36, submitted his letter of resignation to the force Wednesday and has agreed to never apply to be a police officer anywhere, Crown attorney Darcy MacPherson said.

"My primary concern all along has been protecting the public," MacPherson said outside court. "That concern is sufficiently addressed by this agreement."

"In any agreement, you have certainly, but you're giving something up for that certainty."

Saade, who was on the police force for about 7 1/2 years, was charged for allegedly providing information about a witness to a friend who'd been charged with impaired driving in June 2010.

That friend, Daren Ronald Tracey of Halifax, allegedly made threats against the witness. The case against Tracey was dropped in 2011 after he agreed to take part in the province's adult diversion program.

MacPherson said there was no guarantee that Saade would have been found guilty of any of the offences at trial.

"Anybody could be found guilty or not guilty of any offence," the prosecutor said.

"We traded that uncertainty for the certainty of knowing that he's going to lose his job and never be a police officer again."

Saade was suspended with pay in November 2010, although charges weren't laid against him until April 2011. He collected about \$200,000 in salary over the past 31 months while on suspension.

(Herald News)

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