

BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK

A CHRONICLE OF NEWS FOR THE CANADIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMUNITY

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Executive Digest

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MONTREAL - Firefighters, police officers, blue collar workers and others opposed to Bill 3 marched from Montreal's Palais des congrès to the Queen Elizabeth Hotel to meet Treasury Board President Martin Coiteux.

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BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK

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New missing persons policy announced



Oct 10 2014

In the wake of its unprecedented report on murdered and missing aboriginal women, the RCMP has rolled out a revamped national missing persons policy, including a pair of investigative tools that provide a lens into how police approach disappearances.

The policy, which was circulated to commanding officers in September, introduces two standardized documents: a 13-question risk-assessment form and a 10-page missing-person intake report to help ensure certain information is obtained at the outset of an investigation.

The documents are part of the federal force's broader effort to address the problem

of Canada's approximately 1,181 murdered and missing aboriginal women.

In an interview with The Globe and Mail shortly before the policy was finalized, RCMP Superintendent Tyler Bates said the forms would reinforce the "gravity" of missing-person cases and ensure every investigative angle is explored.

The detailed missing-person intake report could prove burdensome for officers who are already "stretched to the limit," said Inspector Mario Giardini, who heads the Vancouver Police Department's diversity and aboriginal policing section. He also expressed wariness over the fact that the risk-assessment form asks whether the person's behaviour is out of character.

"If it's out of character for the person

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[to go missing], does that heighten your response? Certainly it does," he said. "But my argument would be that if you answered 'No,' it shouldn't lower your response."

The risk-assessment form asks "Yes" or "No" questions such as, "Is this person involved in the sex trade, hitchhiking, gambling and/or transient lifestyle?" A supervisor must review all missing-persons investigations, the form says, but if the answer is "Yes" to any of the questions, the matter "requires immediate review and consultation with a supervisor to assess the appropriate response and resources."

The missing-person report, for its part, is comprehensive. Beyond basic questions around appearance and location last seen, it asks about outdoor skills, personality and religion. It also lists specific forensic and DNA items that could be utilized as part of the investigation, including X-rays and blood samples. If the person is a child, the report asks whether he or she is a repeat runaway. Insp. Giardini said that's important because the person's file might note where he or she was located in prior instances.

The document also includes a page dedicated to search results. That section, for example, asks if the investigator employed the use of dogs, boats or planes in the search effort. Supt. Bates, who heads the RCMP National Aboriginal Policing Services, told The Globe in September the form would "ensure that every investigational avenue that could be pursued, is pursued."

(Globe and Mail)

THURSDAY OCTOBER 09, 2014

Oct 09 2014

QUEBEC - The three men who made a dramatic helicopter escape from a Quebec City detention centre have been found guilty of various charges related to gangsterism and drug-trafficking.

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The verdict against Serge Pomerleau, Yves Denis and Denis Lefebvre came down in a Quebec City courtroom this afternoon.

A jury of six men and six women had been deliberating for several days.

The verdict involved a criminal case that was already ongoing against the three men when a chopper airlifted them from the detention centre courtyard in June.

They became the subject of an international manhunt and an Interpol red alert.

All three were captured two weeks later in a luxury Montreal condo.

Oct 09 2014

MONTREAL - Charges have been laid against 13 Montreal city employees - including 11 firefighters - following a rampage during a municipal council meeting in August.

The charges include illegal assembly, mischief and assault.

A total of 57 workers are now facing criminal charges in the Aug. 18 incident where protesters burst into city hall and forced politicians to flee as demonstrators threw documents and other objects from desks.

Of those, 44 were arraigned a week ago.

Six firefighters have already been dismissed for taking part in the protest over proposed provincial government changes to public-sector pension plans.

Under the changes, workers would contribute a higher percentage to their plans.

The Montreal firefighters union called Thursday for a boycott of the world police and firefighter games to be held in Montreal in 2017.

The event usually draws about 10,000 participants from around the world.

Oct 09 2014

OTTAWA - The Harper government's resolve to enforce the law against marijuana use is unshaken by a call to legalize pot from the country's largest mental health and addiction treatment centre.

Justice Minister Peter MacKay says he's surprised that the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health would endorse legalization when other respected organizations are warning about the health risks.

He says the Conservative government remains committed to finding ways to increase enforcement, including potentially making it a ticketing offence to possess small quantities of dope.

Oct 09 2014

KAMLOOPS, B.C. - A Mountie who watched two female inmates have sex in a jail cell in Kamloops, B.C., has been found not guilty of breach of trust by a public officer, but it will likely be months before he learns if he can return to work.

Cpl. Rick Brown was the watch commander on duty in August 2010 when he and other RCMP officers and at least one jail guard viewed the women's sex acts on a

closed-circuit monitor.

The Crown argued at trial that Brown should have intervened but seemed to consider the entire situation entertaining and invited others to watch.

Brown's lawyer told the trial there were no guidelines in place at the time governing what should be done in such situations.

B.C. Supreme Court Justice Selwyn Romilly ruled Thursday that Brown was not out of line in watching the women have sex and prisoners should not expect privacy while behind bars.

Romilly called the case "one of the most bizarre" he'd seen as a judge and was skeptical about whether it should have proceeded even before the trial began last month.

Kamloops RCMP Supt. Brad Mueller said Brown will remain on administrative leave pending an internal disciplinary process that could include a hearing.

"It depends on how much further investigation needs to be done. Realistically, you're probably looking at a few months away," he said.

(Kamloops This Week)

Oct 09 2014

TORONTO - Police are wrapping up their search in the case a Toronto girl who went missing 29 years ago while on her way to go swimming with a friend.

Officers renewed the search for signs of Nicole Morin on Wednesday after receiving a tip from the public.

Close to 40 officers scoured a rural area near Barrie that was previously searched when Nicole vanished in 1985.

But police say no new evidence has surfaced and they won't return to the site Friday.

Nicole was eight when she disappeared after leaving her family's apartment in a west-end Toronto building.

Police, who still regard the disappearance as a missing-person's case, have never arrested anyone in the case and have ruled out any family involvement.

(680News, The Canadian Press)

Oct 09 2014

LONDON - London's long-serving police chief will retire after 36 years of service.

Michael Deeb, chair of the London Police Services Board, announced on Thursday the retirement of Chief Bradley S. Duncan, effective May 1, 2015.

Deeb stated that, "Chief Duncan's leadership of the London Police Service has been characterized by strength, vision, community outreach and a deep commitment to public safety."

Duncan will be completing his contractual time with the board and his accrued time from his years of service with the London police has allowed his retirement to commence in May.

In addition this retirement notice provides the board with ample time to engage in a search for his successor.

"As a board, and as members of the

London community, we thank Chief Duncan for his exemplary and honourable tenure as chief of the London Police Service and wish him a long, healthy and happy retirement.” (CTV London)

Oct 09 2014

EDMONTON - Edmonton has nearly double the rate of sexual assaults compared to other major Canadian cities, according to a recent report, but a local victim advocate said the staggering numbers reflect awareness, not more crimes.

The latest Vital Signs Edmonton 2014 report released earlier this week by the Edmonton Community Foundation and the Edmonton Social Planning council found last year the city had a sexual assault rate of 74.2 per 100,000.

Calgary's rate for sexual assault was 49.6 per 100,000 and Vancouver's had 44.9 per 100,000.

While the report found Edmonton had the highest rate of sexual assaults out of six largest urban centres, Karen Smith, executive director of the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton, said the numbers don't necessarily indicate there is more crime in the city.

Instead, Smith said the numbers could reflect Edmontonians having a greater awareness for the crime and are more likely to report it compared to other cities.

**FRIDAY
OCTOBER 10, 2014**

Oct 10 2014

TORONTO - The Ontario government is immediately ending joint road safety blitzes with the Canada Border Services Agency because the feds used one to arrest undocumented workers.

Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca has written the federal government to say that partnering with the agency “does not align” with the ministry's mandate to make roads as safe as possible.

Ontario's Liberal government ordered the review after a joint commercial vehicle roadside blitz in Toronto in mid-August, when 21 people were arrested because of immigration violations.

Del Duca's letter to Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney says the ministry will only partner with groups that have a shared objective to make roads safer and ensure commercial vehicles comply with all the regulations.

He says Ontario will keep inspecting commercial vehicles at border entry points because “they do not involve CBSA resources.”

Oct 10 2014

The First Nation community of Opitciwan says it can no longer afford to keep its beleaguered aboriginal police force up and running, despite an agreement signed in March that was designed to help keep the tiny department afloat.

Community leaders allege that more than six months after signing an agreement in principle for a new pilot project that promised \$600,000 in additional public-security funding, they have yet to see a cent. The 17 police officers currently employed by the town — who speak the Atikamekw language and have deep roots in the community — may be off the streets within days if money doesn't start flowing in from Quebec City.

In total, Opitciwan's police force was slated to receive \$2.8 million in government funding for the 2014-2015 fiscal year. That sum includes both the new \$600,000 and the \$2.2 million in combined annual funding that is normally awarded by the province and the federal government.

“We've already got \$1.4 million in expenses (since April 1) and we're going into debt,” band council chief Christian Awashish told the Gazette. “It's unacceptable that we're being treated this way.”

The local officers patrolling the streets may not receive their next paycheques if they are allowed to remain on duty, he explained. If and when they stop work, they would be replaced by members of the Sûreté du Québec, but the consequences of that changeover could be profound as most SQ officers don't speak the local language.

The funding delay seemingly boils down to administrative issues.

Opitciwan, a community of 2,100 residents accessible only via a logging road through Quebec's northern boreal forest, faces a unique set of policing challenges.

(Montreal Gazette)

Oct 10 2014

ALLISTON - An OPP officer suffered minor injuries after a pair of tires flew off a truck Thursday afternoon east of Alliston.

Police said an unmarked police cruiser was heading east on Highway 89 around 1 p.m. Oct. 9 when two rear passenger-side tires detached from a westbound commercial pickup truck.

Police said one of the tires rolled off the highway, while the other rolled into traffic and hit the officer's cruiser head on.

The truck driver now faces a loose tire charge under the Highway Traffic Act.

(Alliston Herald)

Oct 10 2014

SLOCAN CITY, B.C. - Police have named a suspect at the centre of an overnight manhunt in the southeastern British Columbia village of Slocan, where residents have been ordered to stay indoors.

RCMP say 45-year-old Peter DeGroot is armed and dangerous and known to them.

Chief Superintendent Frank Smart says a number of firearms have been seized from DeGroot's home as Mounties in the air and on the ground continue to search for him.

Police say he escaped into a forest after shooting at police who had been investigating

a dispute between two people just after noon yesterday.

Today, police wearing flak jackets and infrared goggles are going through thick brush and trees surrounded by low-lying mountains, though visibility is limited by fog in certain areas.

Smart says a police negotiator has joined an emergency response team as the tense situation unfolds.

He is asking the public not to post information about police movements on social media sites to protect the safety of officers and the public.

Some residents slept in their cars on the road outside of the village and others remain in their homes.

Oct 10 2014

BRAMPTON, Ont. - Ontario's police watchdog has cleared a police officer who fatally shot a man who opened fire at a courthouse north of Toronto earlier this year.

The Special Investigations Unit says Charnjit Singh Bassi, 45, shot an officer on security duty at the Brampton courthouse in the torso before that officer returned fire on March 28.

The officer is not named in the release but the SIU has previously identified him as 53-year-old Const. Mike Klarenbeek.

SIU director Tony Loparco says the law allows officers to use force - including lethal force - when necessary for self-defence.

He says the officer “had every reason to believe his life and the lives of those around him were endangered.”

“Despite being shot in the torso and suffering a grievous wound, the subject officer was able to maintain his composure, right himself and return gunfire before collapsing from his injuries,” Loparco said in a statement.

Bassi was pronounced dead at the scene.

Oct 10 2014

FREDERICTON - Hundreds of people filled a Fredericton church Friday to say goodbye to Ron Francis, the RCMP officer who shone a light on the struggles of post-traumatic stress disorder among first responders.

Rev. Monte Peters presided over a funeral service for Francis at St. Anthony's Catholic Church and said the church was filled to standing room only, with about 350 people in attendance.

“It was an incredible number of people who were there,” Peters, who didn't know Francis, said following the hour-long service. “It was a Catholic funeral service, but we tried to integrate some native rituals as well.”

Francis, a 22-year veteran of the force, was dressed in his red serge for the service that featured readings from the Book of Wisdom that were chosen by his family, Peters said. Francis, whose obituary said he was of Maliseet ancestry, was laid to rest at a private burial at Ste. Anne's Catholic Cemetery.

The 43-year-old Mountie was found dead

Monday in his home at the Kingsclear First Nation. It appears no one else was involved in his death, but no details were released about how he died.

Francis made national headlines last year after he complained he wasn't allowed to smoke medicinal marijuana while in uniform to ease symptoms of PTSD.

SATURDAY OCTOBER 11, 2014

Oct 11 2014

MIAMI - Shortly after protests erupted in Ferguson, Mo., over the shooting death of an unarmed, black 18-year-old by a white police officer, the phones at companies that manufacture body cameras started ringing non-stop.

At Seattle-based VIEVU, which has sold the cameras to more than 4,000 law enforcement agencies, CEO Steve Ward says requests for test units are up 70% since the Ferguson protests, and September was the highest sales month in the company's history. "We're doubling our sales force to keep up," Ward said.

Taser International, known for its stun guns, has also been flooded with inquiries for body cameras. "Not only did police recognize, 'I wish they would've had a video,' but now families and all these activists are saying, 'I wish they would've had a video,'" said Taser spokesman Steve Tuttle.

The rush to outfit officers with cameras is to avoid controversies, such as the one surrounding Michael Brown's death in Ferguson, by documenting whether police acted in self-defense or overreacted.

Police have not yet come to grips with privacy questions that arise when cameras go into homes or record sensitive conversations.

Police agencies are implementing policies on the fly over when cameras must be turned on and off, how to store the videos and how to comply with public records laws.

"They're diving headfirst into a pool without checking if there's water," said John Rivera, president of the 32,000-member Florida Police Benevolent Association.

Several groups, including the Police Executive Research Forum and International Association of Chiefs of Police, have published guidelines for using body cameras. A handful of agencies allow their officers to be tested by universities to gauge the impact of the cameras.

The debate over body cameras can be seen in South Florida, where agencies are taking different approaches to the technology.

In Miami-Dade County, the county commission recently approved \$1 million to purchase 500 cameras — enough for roughly half of its force. Mayor Carlos Gimenez said he started exploring body cameras two years ago because of the promise they could minimize encounters that result in violence or death.

Police in Miami aren't so sure.

Miami Assistant Police Chief Rodolfo Llanes is testing 18 body cameras in the

department's motorcycle unit and will increase that to 50 this month. He lists a series of questions over whether to expand the program department-wide.

What happens when citizens say they do not want their conversation recorded? After responding to a routine burglary, can anyone request the video that might show in detail the interior of a person's home? Will an officer who forgets to turn on the camera in a sudden burst of gunfire be accused of intentionally hiding what happened?

How much will it cost to store all that video? How much time will officers be off the street to catalog and review those videos?

"I don't need a sergeant sitting in an office for four hours looking at footage of what happened yesterday," Llanes said. "I need him on the street today."

The few studies that have tested body cameras show improvements for departments.

The first was in Rialto, Calif., in 2012, when the police department outfitted half of its 115-person force with body cameras for a year.

Police Chief Tony Farrar said use-of-force incidents and complaints filed against officers dropped dramatically.

From 2009 to 2011, the department averaged 65 use-of-force incidents per year. After the body cameras were added, that number fell to 25 for a 12-month period. Similarly, complaints against officers dropped from an average of 38 in the years before the study to three during the 12 months ending Feb. 12, 2013.

(USA Today)

MONDAY OCTOBER 13, 2014

Oct 13 2014

SLOCAN CITY, B.C. - The subject of a police manhunt in southern British Columbia after an exchange of gunfire in the tiny village of Slocan last week is dead and there is no longer any danger to the community, RCMP said late Monday.

Police said they discovered Peter DeGroot, 45, Monday afternoon in the vicinity of the village in the West Kootenay region, but they refused to disclose whether further shots were fired.

Chief Superintendent Frank Smart said at 1:20 p.m., two members of the RCMP's emergency response team were near a gravel pit conducting a search of a cabin when they found the man.

"Upon entering the cabin there was an interaction between the subject of the ongoing search and the two ERT members," Smart said in a statement at the RCMP's regional headquarters Monday night. "We can confirm the suspect is now deceased."

Residents, who had endured a village-wide lockdown after the initial incident, reported earlier Monday the town's mood had relaxed and guests had arrived from out of town to celebrate Thanksgiving. Upon learning of the outcome, they once again felt the

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severity of the situation.

B.C.'s police watchdog, the Independent Investigations Office, has been called to the scene. Few details of the events leading to DeGroot's death could be released to avoid compromising the watchdog's investigation, Smart said.

The manhunt was launched on Thursday after police were called over a dispute between two people. They say they were shot at with a rifle, and there was an exchange of gunfire.

DeGroot fled into the woods, triggering an influx of dozens of officers, including helicopters and search dogs.

Police initially urged residents to stay indoors, while police escorted children from a local school to their parents.

TUESDAY OCTOBER 14, 2014

Oct 14 2014

EDMONTON - A violent drug dealer who hid from police in the basement of his Onoway house for 17 years was sent to prison Friday.

Benjamin Louis Young was wanted on a Canada-wide warrant since 1995, when he abducted and beat a man he believed stole two pounds of marijuana from him. Young assaulted the man with a phone book, killed his dog and nearly chopped off two of his fingers.

Several members of Young's gang were tracked down and arrested over several weeks. Young decided to hide in his own house.

"He quite literally lived in the basement of the home for 17 years," defence lawyer Peter Royal said. While Young's wife went to work, he helped raise their two children and did household chores during his self-imposed exile.

"I cannot imagine why, for 17 years, police didn't visit his home, because they would've found him there," Royal said. "It's unbelievable."

The Alberta Law Enforcement Response Team's fugitive apprehension unit finally found Young at his home in October 2012. They also found his marijuana operation.

Young was 33 when he went into hiding. He is now 52.

On Friday, Young was sentenced to three years in prison after he pleaded guilty to assault causing bodily harm, extortion and killing an animal. He has already been fined \$2,500 for the marijuana operation officers found in 2012.

(Edmonton Journal)

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 15, 2014

Oct 15 2014

BANFF, Alta. - Provincial justice ministers are expected to demand this week that the federal government recommit to funding the legal aid program.

The ministers are meeting through to Friday with their federal counterparts in Banff, Alta., with legal aid at the top of the agenda.

Manitoba Justice Minister Andrew Swan says that since 2006, Ottawa has increasingly taken a backseat in funding the program, which provides legal services to people in need.

Swan says in Manitoba alone, the federal government now only contributes about 16 per cent of legal aid costs, compared to the mid-1990s when it was split on 50-50 basis.

Swan also fears Ottawa will not renew its funding of Winnipeg's drug-treatment court and the band constable program as of March 31.

Ontario and Nova Scotia also offer drug-treatment courts, while Alberta and New Brunswick have band constable programs similar to Manitoba's, where it's more widespread.

The federal government has funded the Winnipeg drug-treatment court with about \$600,000 annually for the past nine years. Because there is no guarantee funding will continue, the court is not accepting any new

clients and plans to expand it have been put on hold.

Drug-treatment court diverts drug users from the criminal justice system into treatment and the band constable program provides peace officers to 31 Manitoba First Nations.

The 45-year-old band constable program allows First Nations to police their own communities in partnership with the RCMP.

Ottawa has run it since 1969, but notified Manitoba last February it was terminating it.

Swan says without an extension, his province could find itself weighing whether to continue the program itself.

(Winnipeg Free Press)

Oct 15 2014

UNITY, Sask. - A media report says the RCMP is refusing to acknowledge that the deaths of a husband and wife in Saskatchewan last month were a murder-suicide.

Shirley and Donald Parkinson were

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found dead on the couple's farm near Unity on September 10th.

The CBC says Saskatchewan's chief coroner and the woman's mother, Naden Hewko, have confirmed that Shirley Parkinson's death was a homicide, but the Mounties insist it was simply a sudden death.

Mandy Maier, a Saskatchewan RCMP spokeswoman, says the federal Privacy Act prohibits them from releasing an individual's personal information when the public is not in danger.

She says that since there wasn't a suspect at large or a pending criminal trial, there was no reason to release information.

But the CBC report says that in 2012, the RCMP released a statement confirming that Darren Wourms killed his 23-year-old wife, Hayley, their two-year-old son, Cayden, then himself near St. Walburg, Saskatchewan.

The statement said the deaths of Hayley and Cayden were homicides.

Shirley Parkinson was a well-known public health nurse who immunized many children, advised new mothers on breast-feeding and volunteered as a Brownie leader.

Hewko says Donald Parkinson loved his wife, but she believes he had mental health issues far worse than anyone in the family realized.

She also says more education on mental health is needed.

(CBC, The Canadian Press, Online Out)

Oct 15 2014

ELLIOT LAKE, Ont. - Decades of incompetence, neglect, greed and dishonesty by a succession of owners, engineers and municipal officials led to the deadly cave-in of a northern Ontario mall two years ago, a judicial inquiry reported Wednesday.

In a scathing indictment of those who allowed the Algo Centre Mall to rust to the point of collapse, Commissioner Paul Belanger pulls few punches in holding those responsible to account.

"Although it was rust that defeated the structure of the Algo mall, the real story behind the collapse is one of human, not material, failures," Belanger writes.

"Some of these failings were minor, some were not: they ranged from apathy, neglect and indifference through mediocrity, ineptitude and incompetence, to outright greed, obfuscation and duplicity."

Ironically, the mall seldom lacked for professional oversight from architects and engineers, with some 30 visits, inspections and reports over its 33-year life.

However, the scrutiny never translated into a proper fix for the leaks that prompted some to dub the centre the "Algo Falls." No one, it seems, appeared to realize how severely the rust would compromise the integrity of the structural steel.

Some of the engineers involved simply forgot the "moral and ethical foundation" of their vocation and, Belanger concludes, were more concerned with pandering to clients than with protecting the public.

"Their inspections were so cursory and incomplete as to be essentially meaningless," he says.

The commissioner was particularly critical of Robert (Bob) Wood, the engineer who signed off on the health of the mall just weeks before it collapsed. His work and conduct, Belanger says, were "markedly inferior."

Wood, who faces criminal charges in connection with the collapse, admitted to falsifying his report to appease the owner.

According to the commission, the mall's various owners hid the problems, then tried to sell their way out of them when patchwork fixes didn't work. Profit considerations trumped all other concerns, Belanger says.

The "crafty" and intransigent Bob Nazarian, who owned the mall when the disaster struck, lied about repair work, and resorted to "subterfuge and falsehood to mislead authorities, tenants and the public," the report concludes.

Wilfully blind municipal officials - the mayor, council and building inspectors - were of little use in dealing with the worsening problems.

They ignored public complaints and warnings about the leaks and falling concrete. They illegally shut the public out of meetings. They failed to enforce, or were ignorant of, their own bylaws, according to the report.

Instead, their approach was one of "non-interference" aimed at safeguarding the mall as a social and economic hub that provided significant tax revenues.

At one point, Belanger notes, the municipality was the mall's owner, its tenant, and enforcer of property standards - the "worst possible conflict situation."

"Warning signs went unseen by eyes likely averted for fear of jeopardizing the mall's existence," Belanger says.

"Occasional voices of alarm and warning blew by deaf and callous ears."

The report also notes that officials with the provincial Ministry of Labour, which had offices in the mall, appeared curiously indifferent to the state of disrepair, and unresponsive to complaints.

In all, the report makes 71 recommendations. They include setting minimum maintenance standards for buildings, beefed-up inspections, and an expanded emergency response capability.

Belanger is effusive in his praise for the initial local emergency response. His view of the provincial heavy urban search and rescue team that was called in - despite the good intentions and courage of its members - is far more jaundiced.

The team deployed without sufficient numbers, without a proper plan or command structure, and treated family members and the community poorly, he says.

They also ignored an offer of help from experienced mine rescuers. They called off the search due to the dangerous conditions instead of simply putting the effort on hold while they considered other options.

"Ontario's urban search and rescue system needs a careful re-examination to

provide better overall coverage and quality of service," Belanger concludes.

The rescue effort, he says, was not a model that others should strive to emulate.

He does, however, praise then-premier Dalton McGuinty for getting the rescue effort restarted.

In response, the Ontario government promised a quick review of the recommendations to ensure the province is better prepared for any emergency.

Provincial police said they had made improvements to their crisis response, including mandatory training for major critical incident teams who are now deployed throughout the province.

Oct 15 2014

EDMONTON - The Alberta Law Enforcement Response Team has made what it says is the largest hashish seizure in Alberta.

The response team says 30 kilograms of hash was seized in Edmonton on Oct. 1.

It says the hashish was packaged and pressed in 30 one-kilogram bricks and found in a west-Edmonton storage locker.

Almost three kilograms of marijuana and \$5,000 in cash were also seized.

The investigation was initiated after a Crime Stoppers tip from the public.

Craig Bendt Matthiessen, who is 49 and from Edmonton, faces several drug-related charges.

Oct 15 2014

VANCOUVER - The public safety minister is downplaying the Conservative government's failure to introduce a system designed to track potential terrorists who are joining overseas conflicts.

The Canada-U.S. perimeter security pact includes a provision that would see Canada collect records related to people leaving the country on international flights.

The agreement set a deadline of June 30 of this year, but such a system is not yet in place, nor are the legislative and regulatory changes that would be required first.

Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney insists Canada remains committed to tracking international travel, though he suggests the security pact is merely a road map rather than a set of firm deadlines.

Blaney says Canada continues to work with the United States to implement the pact, and he says the plan is on track.

But Blaney declined to say whether a new target date has been set for the data-gathering system.

Oct 15 2014

TORONTO - A 17-year-old boy has been charged with attempted murder and five other charges in connection with a shooting in front of a Toronto high school that killed two teens.

The two alleged victims - 17-year-old Zaid Athir Youssef and 15-year-old Michael Menjivar - were gunned down Oct. 6 in the city's northwest.

They were both students at local Catholic high schools.

The accused youth was arrested Tuesday and charged with attempted murder, point firearm, weapons dangerous in the public peace, failure to comply, possession of a firearm without a licence and possession of a firearm without a permit.

He appeared in youth court Wednesday for a bail hearing and cannot be named under the country's youth justice law.

Police had said they believed the shooting was targeted but unrelated to the nearby high school.

Oct 15 2014

AURORA, Ont. - A York Regional Police officer has been charged after an internal investigation into the alleged misuse of insurance benefits.

Police say their professional standards bureau began its investigation this July after receiving complaints from the force's benefits provider.

Const. Salwa Husseini, 31, was charged Wednesday with two counts each of uttering false documents and fraud under \$5,000.

Husseini has been on the force since 2011 and was suspended with pay in July pending the outcome of the investigation.

She's due in court Nov. 27.

Oct 15 2014

FARIBAULT, Minn. - A former nurse in Minnesota who admitted to going online years ago and preying upon suicidal people - encouraging two to take their lives - must serve nearly six months in jail as part of a sentence handed down Wednesday.

William Melchert-Dinkel was sentenced to three years in prison in the deaths of an English man and a Canadian woman, but he won't have to serve the prison term if he complies with conditions of his probation that include the jail time.

In Minnesota, state prisons house serious offenders while local cells are for less serious offenders.

Melchert-Dinkel must report to jail on Oct. 24.

"I am sorry... for my actions and what I have done," Melchert-Dinkel said in court before he was sentenced. "I have repented."

The 52-year-old was convicted in September of one count of assisting a suicide and one count of attempting to assist a suicide in the deaths of Mark Drybrough, 32, of Coventry, England and Nadia Kajouji, 18, of Brampton, Ont..

Kajouji jumped into a frozen river in 2008. She was a student at Carleton University in Ottawa at the time. Drybrough hanged himself in 2005.

**THURSDAY
OCTOBER 16, 2014**

Oct 16 2014

OMPAH, Ont. - The province's police watchdog is investigating after a 52-year-old man was injured while OPP officers were making an arrest.

Police say officers from the OPP's Larnark County detachment responded to an

assault that took place at a residence in Ompah, Ont., on Tuesday night.

As officers attempted to make an arrest, the suspect fled on an ATV before officers were eventually able to stop him.

Police say the man and an OPP officer received injuries in the process and were both taken to hospital, treated and released.

The officer was treated and released.

The suspect, Bruce Watson, faces multiple charges which include assault causing bodily harm and dangerous driving.

Oct 16 2014

REGINA - Saskatchewan Corrections says a man who was mistakenly released from court last month is back in custody after more than three weeks.

Brandon Krewenchuk had been charged with break and enter with intent to commit an indictable offence and theft.

The 18-year-old man was released on Sept. 22, but the mistake wasn't discovered for 17 days.

In October 2008, two prisoners were accidentally released from court instead of being remanded into custody.

That prompted a procedural review by the provincial government.

Corrections says it will review Krewenchuk's release in accordance with policy.

Oct 16 2014

OTTAWA - The federal government plans to amend the law governing the Canadian Security Intelligence Service to give the spy agency more authority to track terrorists overseas.

Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney says the terrorist threat has become more complex since the law was passed 30 years ago, adding it does not stop at Canada's border.

As expected, Blaney says the government will also take steps to ensure CSIS can protect the identity of its sources.

Canada and other western nations fear that citizens who travel overseas to take part in the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant's guerrilla-style battles could come home with intent to do harm.

The federal plan to bolster security powers follows a recent statement from the RCMP that the national police force has about 63 active investigations on 90 suspected extremists who intend to join fights abroad or who have returned to Canada.

Blaney was joined at a news conference in Banff, Alta., by Andy Ellis, CSIS assistant director of operations, and RCMP deputy commissioner Janice Armstrong.

Oct 16 2014

WASHINGTON - The director of the F.B.I., James B. Comey, said Thursday that federal laws should be changed to require telecommunications companies to give law enforcement agencies access to the encrypted communications of individuals suspected of crimes.

In a speech at the Brookings Institution in Washington, Mr. Comey warned that crimes could go unsolved if law enforcement officers cannot gain access to information that technology companies like Apple and Google are protecting using increasingly sophisticated encryption technology.

"Unfortunately, the law hasn't kept pace with technology, and this disconnect has created a significant public safety problem," he said.

Mr. Comey said that he was hoping to spur Congress to update the 20-year-old Communications Assistance for Law Enforcement Act, which does not require companies to give law enforcement direct access to individuals' communications.

The F.B.I. has long had concerns about devices "going dark" — when technology becomes so sophisticated that the authorities cannot gain access to them. But now, Mr. Comey is warning that the new encryption technology has evolved to the point that it could adversely affect crime solving.

"Those charged with protecting our people aren't always able to access the evidence we need to prosecute crime and prevent terrorism, even with lawful authority," he said. "We have the legal authority to intercept and access communications and information pursuant to court order, but we often lack the technical ability to do so."

(New York Times)

Oct 16 2014

MONTREAL - Firefighters, police officers, blue collar workers and others opposed to Bill 3 marched from Montreal's Palais des congrès to the Queen Elizabeth Hotel to meet Treasury Board President Martin Coiteux.

The demonstration against Quebec's pension reform bill came just hours after the news broke that four senior Montreal police officers would be disciplined for their role in a violent protest at Montreal City Hall in August.

After the incident, Montreal police chief Marc Parent said he was disappointed that members of the police force allowed protesters to barge into city hall.

He said he could not help but notice there were shortcomings in security.

Parent assembled a team of investigators to look at how police handled the protest.

Cmdr. Ian Lafrenière said four senior officers face discipline — not for their actions, but rather for their lack of action.

At the time, the head of the Montreal Police Brotherhood reportedly said commanders ordered officers not to intervene in the protest.

Lafrenière said the picture of what happened is not that black and white.

"If it was that simple, that clear, those commanding officers would have been charged days after the event," Lafrenière said.

(CBC News)