

## RCMP Veterans' Association Nova Scotia Division



---

### MCC RCMP Vets Submission Pertaining to Phase Two

The following is a summary of the items the RCMP Veterans Association sees as key to improving policing in the province and it based on the evidence submitted to the commission during phase two.

The one major issue we have a great deal of expertise in and are concern over, is how policing is delivered in this province and the failure of DOJ in Nova Scotia to repair the problems they created in 1992 when they handed over their responsibility for polincg to the municipalities.

Also of concern is the total exclusion on any discussions on Capacity in policing, I will define capacity later. Not including capacity is a major problem when understanding and defining the problems in policing in Nova Scotia. Not focusing on capacity in policing in NS will create an environment in the Commission that will set the stage in phase three to make recommendations that fail in terms of fixing policing in Nova Scotia.

#### Concerns generated from Phase 2

1. We have not seen much of anything during phase two to address the issues of why there is a huge discrepancy between the number of police in small towns and police in rural areas. There has been a great deal of focus on asking municipal police how to fix rural policing problems when in fact municipal police have no idea how to police rural communities. You had a round table on this and the experts very clear on this explaining there is huge difference and municipal police do not have the answers you are looking for.
2. Then there is a huge focus on community policing. Again, the Commission appears to be asking municipal police to define this and to explain it in a rural setting. They have no idea. The experts said that community policing was born and bred in rural communities where officers live amongst the community and are a major part of that community. Unlike major cities such as Calgary and Vancouver who train their officers to never tell anyone what they do for a living and to never wear their uniform to and from work, so they remain anonymous in the community. This concept is common in municipal agencies and is drilled into them form the beginning of training.
3. No mention of the need for a national police force to be able to cover major national and international events. We do not want the USA model with 18000 police agencies, when we already have a better model in Canada.

## RCMP Veterans' Association Nova Scotia Division



4. No mention of the needs for national policing standards to make sure Canada solves the problem of agencies not being able to work seamlessly together. Yet we have heard the experts say this is must. If we want to fix the problems identified in this enquiry.
5. Not listening to the experts on the round tables and their research.
6. A push to drive the RCMP out of Nova Scotia, driven by NS Chiefs of Police Association, independent Chiefs of police, the media, local municipal governments and some of the lawyers' representing families.
7. Concern that the commission has left out any information about the single biggest issue **Capacity in policing.**

### **Need for evidence based, measurable, monitored and accountable recommendations.**

We are worried about knee jerk reactions by recommendations that may not actually accomplish the goal intended.

As examples, the mock police cars and police uniforms. Nova Scotia already passed a law that will not change anything. DOJ did consult with the RCMP Veterans on this matter and the law accommodated some of our input. Yet the bottom line is that anyone can buy off a dealer's car lot or a used car lot a vehicle the same make and model as a police car, get it painted white or any colour in one of the 1500 paint shops in NS. Destroying used police cars does nothing to prevent anyone from making up a mock police car. Destroying these used police cars is just a tax burden on taxpayers. The issue here is that all recommendations must give proof that they will make a meaningful effective change or difference for the future. Destroying police cars does not meet this standard.

Old police uniform, fall under the same set of rules. Fact is anyone can go to clothing store buy the same pants, boots, jacket, shirt that police wear. They can then go to a sewing shop and buy the ribbon for the stripe on the legs, they can also buy shoulder flashes or have them made. So once again banning these items does nothing to effect meaningful change.

Both examples are simply knee-jerk reactions.

On the clothing issue the NS law allows for the red serge of the RCMP to remain with the retired members. It also allows for retirement badges. Yet during the round table of this issue, it was quite clear that removing those two items from retired members was on the table with the commission, this despite having the meaning of those items and the value of them to the retired members was explained. This one issue also falls under the Knee-jerk reaction syndrome.

Recommendations on this police paraphernalia is currently covered under the NS act and the Criminal Code. To tweak the acts that cover it and make some difference would as an example,

## RCMP Veterans' Association Nova Scotia Division

---



allow mock police cars for movies and antique (20 years old or older) ones for parades. Both would have to be registered with the government and the owners will have constant criminal record checks done and annual checks on the vehicles by the police to make sure they are only used for the legal purpose.

As for the red serge that is the only uniform allowed by retired RCMP, that is not a working uniform, and it is earned by the members who wore it.

Retirement police badges. The round table on this issue explained that many police departments across Canada give retiring officers their actual badge with it clearly marked RETIRED.

Information coming from that round table was mixed because some retired police like myself know the value of having identifiable retired police on the street who can be trained witnesses, assist act accident etc., monitor situations and provide valuable information to police responding etc. The was only the retired chief of Kentville who was opposed as she did not understand that this is the norm in most cities in Canada and the USA. The retired officers know they are not police and they also do not identify as such.

The chief of Vancouver PD was asked once about what he feels about retired members of his department. He said they are the eyes and ears on the street in addition to serving members. They are a valued asset to Vancouvers public safety.

Retired members of police agencies are not a problem. There are laws that they know about impersonating a police officer and they will not break those laws, if they do then charge them, that is what the current laws are for. In Canada we don't penalize a whole group of legal citizens because of one person who broke the law, but in recent times this is the trend.

The question needs to ask on these issues we have identified under this topic. Why is it that when one man breaks the laws that everyone else must pay for their crime? What I mean is in todays society we often see knee -jerk reactions that ban objects, sports, cars, uniforms etc. Banning these items does not meet the goal of stopping such crimes happening in the future.

We see this everyday with the sport shooters (all 2.2 million of them) who have a criminal record check done on them everyday and have their sporting equipment banned. Yet they have not broken any laws. Their sports are disappearing, and gang violence rises, and murder and suicide continue at the same rate. The point here is recommendations must make a real change to curb what ever crimes being tackled. They must be measurable and need to be monitored.

Those who have served their country should not be treated or turned into criminals because of one man's crazy act of violence. The very idea of criminalizing those who served and earned their uniform etc. is irrational and stunningly wrong.

## RCMP Veterans' Association Nova Scotia Division

---



Banning the Red serge as an example, sends a loud and clear message to RCMP vets, is that Canadians do not trust us and that our service (risking our lives for everyone) was all for not. This affects our mental health in a very bad way. Everything we did in our adult life is meaningless to Canadians.

There must be very clear rules around recommendations that ensure that no Canadian is unjustly being treated unfairly or differently than others or are targeted by the recommendations without very strong evidence that it will solve the problem at hand.

Bans, only affect law-abiding citizens and do nothing for criminals to prevent their crimes, that is why they are criminals, they don't follow the laws.

More laws. There is a great deal of evidence that show we have enough laws to deal with the matters at hand. They just must be enforced. I will use NS provincial statutes to explain. In the Motor Vehicle Act NS, there is a bicycle helmet law in place yet everyday police drive cyclists with no helmet but do not stop them. Failing to keep right except to pass, never enforced. Taking the lane closest to you at an intersection, never enforced. J-walking never enforced. Impeding traffic, never enforced. All these offences either cause collisions or increase injury yet they are not enforced.

The point here is that lack of enforcement needs to be factored into recommending new laws when those that exist are not enforced.

Recommendations must be proven to make a real difference in removing the risk of this crime. They can not be feel good measures that do not make real change.

### **Concern number one.**

The discrepancy in the number of municipal police officers vs rural police in NS.

The average number of police officers per 100000 population is 183. This stat is from Stats Canada and made up from 49 of the largest **urban** police forces in Canada.

Halifax sits at 219 per 100000 pop.

Truro sits at 300 per 100000 pop.

Using Truro PD and Colchester County as an example.

Truro 12000 residents. Police officers, 38. Sq. Km coverage 34. Tax per resident for policing \$456

Colchester 32000 residents. police officers, 31. Sq. km coverage 3595. Tax cost per resident \$136



## RCMP Veterans' Association Nova Scotia Division

---

Should be noted that the average number of residents per sworn officer is 546, Truro has 332 and Colchester has 1182.

These facts as listed demonstrate the huge gaps between urban and rural police coverage.

The question then is why the difference?

1. Urban police chiefs understand that they can ask for officers every year and are in constant contact with their police commission and the mayor.
2. Rural RCMP commanders have no idea how this works. Then the RCMP must also work through Division HQ who also don't know how to ask for additional officers.
3. Costs for additional officers. Urban police do not provide an all-in cost per officer, they have many items like cars, computers, building, electric bills, fuel etc. all under other municipal budgets. So, their cost per officer appears lower. RCMP are all in, so it appears to be more, but it includes pensions, medical, specialized sections, like Ident, dive teams, ERT etc., plus the Federal government pays 30% of that cost, so it is lower overall.
4. 1992 NS DOJ passed the responsibility of policing to the county governments. This is where the hole thing fell apart. The RCMP then had to deal with every county separately when in the past it was only go to DOJ for more police. The counties do not understand policing and turn down most requests for more officers stating costs. Colchester as an example has not had a policing advisory meeting in two years yet the law says they must have at least four.
5. The county governments do not understand that they are responsible to have the proper number of police, yet they refuse to pay for them. Laying blame for lack of officers on the RCMP, who can only request more to be approved by the county.

The commission does not appear to be focused on the facts of this difference and continue to ask urban police how to fix this and or measuring policing by urban police information.

Recommendations should include:

- If the model remains the same in the province for policing then the RCMP must train their Div. HQ people and detachment commanders on their role and responsibility to request more officer, just like the urban chiefs do.
- Make sure that urban police budgets and cost per officer are all so that it is a fair, clear understanding of all actual costs. No more major line items left out.



## RCMP Veterans' Association Nova Scotia Division

---

- DOJ must take back control of policing in the province and remove it from county governments. They must also step up to national policing numbers in the province.
- If the model of policing stays the same in NS, then county governments must be properly trained in their role in policing to understand the true costs, and advantages of being part of a provincial and federal policing model they currently have. Step up and pay for it. It is their responsibility.

### Concern number two

Community based policing.

In rural communities where the Police are transferred into these arrears to live and work, the police have no choice but to be part of the community.

As an example, I will use my personal experience in small communities. Three detachments I worked in for my examples are Inverness, Cheticamp and St Peters, in Cape Breton.

I had to rent a house when I was there except in Cheticamp where I lived in barracks at the detachment. Everyone in the community know who I was, What I drove, where I lived. On time off I had to participate with people in the community. I went fishing with some local fishers, hunted with locals, snowmobiled with locals, played sports with locals. I went to local dances, restaurants and bars. Everyone in the community knew everything I did. I mean everything.

Because there are limited social services in these communities we were where people went for those services. We would help them get everything from mental health assistance, welfare, etc.

People would even come to our homes to get assistance; most respected our privacy but on occasion we had people come to our homes. We often had a police car at home because we were on call.

To put the on call in perspective it is much like full time firefighter who eat and sleep in the fire station. The difference is, we were at our home when called out. Time to be in service because the police car was home with us was the same as firefighters being called to a fire.

In these communities the police are the go-to for anything out of the norm for people.

We were engaged with them in everything. Even going to local stores and grocery shopping everyone knew who we were and then got to see what we ate as well.

We were completely a part of the community.

I was single in all these detachments and dated local women. This put me even tighter in the communities by becoming part of families there.

## RCMP Veterans' Association Nova Scotia Division

---



At Christmas time I would be invited to several homes every year for dinner. Some years as many as a dozen invites.

I was trusted and people often would divulge intimate secrets and ask for advice. Often asking me for advice on dealing with many personal issues they were having. Things they could not discuss with their family or friends. That trust is so strong in some cases that in one case where an indigenous teen was sexually assaulted and was being examined by a doctor in the hospital, the grand mother of then would not let the doctor examine the teen unless I was present.

I relied heavily everyday for my back to come from the locals as my back up an hour to an hour and half away at best. In Cheticamp, 50% of our area was out of radio contact. So, my only back up was locals. If I was not trusted and part of the community I was doomed.

That is what community policing in rural NS is really like.

I also policed in Bedford, Lr Sackville, Tantallon and Cole Harbour. These are much more urban as they are bedroom communities for Halifax/Dartmouth. Back-up there was minutes away. Did not have to even live in the community. Never had to be on call. For the most part my neighbours did not even know me. I could play hockey on RCMP teams alone so very little interaction with locals.

Community policing in these communities was all about being forced into schools, meetings etc. to try to be recognized in the community.

One of the experts who presented to the commission Dr Rosemary Ricciardelli spoke a great deal about her research where she was embedded in the home of a rural police officer in a remote rural area. She spent 4 months living and working with this officer. One of her papers is very clear in explaining that rural policing is community-based policing at it's best.

The concern is the huge amount of focus on urban styled community-based policing which is not even close to rural community policing. RCMP Vets are very concerned that the commission may not truly understand the difference.

### **Concern number three.**

Need for a national police force in Canada that can contract Provincial policing services. There has been little discussion other than the media and local governments saying to remove the RCMP and replace them with municipal police.

Part of this issue is around the facts and figure I will discuss late under capacity in policing.

There was a round table that discussed some of these issues. At that time the experts did point out that when you have federal police force you eliminate the differences between agencies,

## RCMP Veterans' Association Nova Scotia Division

---



remove the difficulty of working seamlessly together and are able to amass greater resource in people and equipment to improve policing services.

The American who spoke at this session was charged with trying to bring 18000 police agencies to a place with their training, equipment etc. to more aligned with each other so they could work together. He does not recommend the USA system of too many agencies that can not meet the needs of policing and creates huge problems in working together and creating consistent standards. He and others on the panel were puzzled that Canada which has a federal police force that contracts out to provinces in even being questioned with respect to keeping that system which they saw at the way to fix the issues around bring police agencies to same place and working together seamlessly.

One of the speakers said the federal policing system in his country is the way to go.

Scotland in 2013 disbanded the 39 police agencies they had and formed one federal force. Now England and others are looking at it as a model to follow as is if fixed the problem we had during this event.

If we look at Ontario and Quebec with their very large provincial police forces (of which small provinces can not afford), are essentially a federal force in their province. Even at that they would have difficulty bringing in 400 officers to assist on moments notice such as the RCMP did for the mass Casualty event in NS.

The advantages of keeping our federal policing system that contracts to provinces is the way forward, but we fear it is going to be missed due to lack of public education and focus on this from the MCC.

### **Concern number 4.**

No conversation about national policing standards, but rather looking at provincial standards and looking at local municipal agencies for standards.

That approach was discussed somewhat in previous concern but also must be focused on standards that allow interprovincial seamless working together. For Nova Scotia to go on their won will isolate us from the rest of the county. Cut us off from access to expertise and human resources when required.

We only have to look at the American system to see the problems multiple agencies and standards cause in policing and how that affects the policing service that is delivered.

### **Concern number 5.**

Not listening to the experts on the round tables and their research.





## RCMP Veterans' Association Nova Scotia Division

---

The proof is in the pudding as my mother would say. Until we see the recommendations coming forward from the MCC we do not know if the experts have been heard or not.

The media seems to totally have ignored what the experts are saying and we as RCMP Vets certainly hope this will not be mirrored by the MCC.

WE are concerned yet hopeful the expert's information will be heard and that will be thought through to ensure recommendations meet the standard of solving the problems identified and are balanced, measurable, audited and analyzed over time to ensure they make a difference and are not just knee-jerk reactions that often come from governments when trying to appease the public.

### **Concern number 6**

A push to drive the RCMP out of Nova Scotia, driven by NS Chiefs of Police Association, independent Chiefs of police, the media, local municipal governments and some of the lawyers' representing families.

This concern is generated by many documents the MCC has on record. It also comes from the statements for chiefs of police given to MCC. The media has also been on tis band wagon for years now largely due to the poor job the RCMP has done in working with the media which then is the basis for public education and public perception.

Municipal governments are uneducated on their role and responsibility to hire proper numbers of police and yet their education on the matter comes mostly from Municipal chiefs of police and the media two sources that do not work in rural policing and have agendas.

Having said this, the RCMP Vets have an agenda as well. It simply is to make sure all Canadians have equal levels of policing services and equipment, expertise etc., at an affordable level set nationally so that there is no difference is policing in BC, NS, NB, Sack etc., all the same across the entire country. We are on fixed incomes, and we do not want to have to deal with the same issues our health care system has which is vast differences from province to province, with no family doctors, long waits in emergency and for life saving surgeries etc. We want our policing to be better than that and affordable on a national basis not a provincial basis. We are looking for evidence based logical approach to ensure the best policing of anywhere in the world. Nothing less. What that looks like in the end from our research is that federal standards, federal police forces and parts of other agencies like the Quebec model, where municipalities smaller than 50000 people can not have their own police force is best suited to deliver policing equally across any country.

What has concerned us most about the evidence from the above groups is dangerous from what we see. We have watched the evidence that blames the RCMP for the inability of local police to be able to communicate directly, yet that was caused by those agencies not purchasing the same

## RCMP Veterans' Association Nova Scotia Division

---



equipment to meet the highest standards the province has. It was the RCMP who caused that issue ye the blame was clearly laid on them in the evidence before the MCC. Another example is blaming the RCMP for having too few officers, when that is the responsibility of the country governments to ensure there are enough officers. There are many other examples stemming from the evidence before the MCC.

The structure of policing in NS since 1992 where DOJ handed over policing to local municipalities has broken the system and put us in the spot are today with municipal agencies not willing to work with the RCMP who the provincial police in NS are. The evidence is clear that this is the reality. It should not be the case, but the municipal police are not willing to play in the sand box with the RCMP. Other provinces do not have this problem between agencies.

Consider this.

The Rodney King incident where 132 people died in riots because of the excessive use of force by LAPD

Toronto PD and the Sherman case where evidence was lost due to improper processes.

The Ferguson police shooting and riots afterwards.

Ottawa police and the trucker's convoy where it took three weeks to resolve.

The Oland murder where St John PD dropped the ball from the get-go on the case.

Ask yourself in all of these cases, did anyone ever say, we have to remove the LAPD, Ferguson PD, Toronto PD, St John PD, Ottawa PD?

NO, no, one ever said this.

Now ask yourself why is it that this is an issue in NS with the RCMP? The answer is clearly politics, both big P and small p.

Even in the recent case at Rood elementary in Texas, no one has asked for the removal of that local police department, all that happened is the Chief was fired.

This push to remove the RCMP is a deep concern of ours.

### **Concern number 7**

Concern that the commission has left out any information about the single biggest issue

#### **Capacity in policing.**

Capacity is a key theme coming form the evidence in the enquiry. The fact there was four officers on in Colchester that night has been an issue in the commission. The inability of other

## RCMP Veterans' Association Nova Scotia Division

---



agencies to work together. The difference in agencies standards. The difference in training and access to equipment and special sections are all capacity issues. The ability of the RCMP to bring in 400 officers from across the country in days, is also a capacity issue on the positive side.

Unfortunately, capacity has not been discussed in the enquiry.

In terms of capacity, the idea of a provincial police force for NS and other provinces, BC and Alberta who are considering this move, will only push Canada from a model of policing via national standards etc. to a fragmented model like the USA where there are 18000 different agencies that can not work together. This is not what the information given to the MCC is recommending but it is being pushed by local agencies, governments and provincial governments in Canada.

Quebec and Ontario have provincial police because they have the largest populations in Canada, and this allows them to afford such a force. If we look at history you will see that NS, BC and other provinces also had provincial police up until WW1. The cost of the war on governments made the cost of a provincial police force too high. So, the federal government with the provinces worked out a contract system for provinces to contract provincial policing to the national police force the RCMP. This system has been in place ever since. It is a system that works and provides for capacity in major events. It is also the most cost effective and sets standards that are interchangeable between provinces. This model also adds to the capacity with respect to training the same and using the same equipment and able to develop more specialized sections and expertise.

Capacity is complicated and deals with all aspect of policing, it is not just the number of police officers.

Quebec has another method of ensuring that the capacity they need to police in their province, and it is much like that of the RCMP contracts.

In Quebec a municipality can not have their own police force unless they have a population of 50000 and can not investigate major crimes like murder without 250000 population. This is a capacity issue. They contract the QPP to the under 50000 population municipalities and provide the expertise required for major crimes to all, thus standardizing their policing and creating seamless interagency policing. They reduce duplication of services and equipment and they do not have the issues we have in NS (Nova Scotia is the only province with a dysfunctional policing system with bitter infighting between agencies). Quebec also have DOJ in charge of the policing not municipalities.

Nova Scotia could have the same model simply by keeping the RCMP contract and DOJ taking control back and following the Quebec model by using the RCMP contract.

## RCMP Veterans' Association Nova Scotia Division

---



Separate provincial police agencies will not be able to work together due to different standards and training and equipment. Just like it is now with multiple agencies in NS.

This means from a capacity issue, when a major incident occurs there is not capacity to bring in resources. The very idea flies in the face of the main goal of the MCC which it to improve police ability to respond to these incidents.

The case of four officers on in Colchester the night of the incident is also capacity and under the RCMP provincial contract the number of officers in any given county is the responsibility of the county government. Should there have been 8 RCMP on that night? Maybe so but that could have happened had the county governments asked for and paid for those officers. The legal responsibility is with the DOJ and the county governments.

This is also part of the capacity issue, understanding whose responsibility it is to ensure the proper capacity is in place. Remember that capacity is not just number of officers, but getting the best standards, training, equipment special sections etc.

Here is a recent example of the lack of capacity in Canada:

Ottawa police during the Freedom Convoy did not have the capacity on its own to handle the incident and then also due to the difference between agencies did not have the capacity to draw from other agencies for help. It took three weeks to resolve the issue.

### **Conclusion**

The RCMP Veterans Association have focused on these seven concerns that have come up from Phase two of the enquiry. This document is only a briefing of the issues not the details.

We are requesting that our experts who have been researching these issues, be involved in the upcoming plans in phase three. We can offer a great deal of knowledge and assistance in the round tables, face to face discussions and meetings and in analysing and editing of the draft recommendations.

The goal is to improve policing in Canada.

Brian Carter



## RCMP Veterans' Association Nova Scotia Division

---