

**COMMITTEE**

**ON**

**VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**Thursday, October 13, 2011**

**Committee Room 1**

**Commissionaires Nova Scotia**

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**VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

Gary Burrill (Chair)  
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Harold Theriault  
Alfie MacLeod  
Chuck Porter

[Gary Burrill was replaced by Leonard Preyra.]  
[Alfie MacLeod was replaced by Keith Bain.]

In Attendance:

Kim Langille  
Legislative Committee Clerk

WITNESSES

Commissionaires Nova Scotia

Colonel R. Barry Wark  
Chair, Board of Governors

Colonel J. Michael A. Brownlow  
Chief Executive Officer

Vice Admiral D.E. Miller  
Chair, Veterans Support Committee



House of Assembly  
Nova Scotia

**HALIFAX, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2011**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**9:00 A.M.**

**CHAIR**

**Jim Boudreau**

**THE CHAIR:** Good morning, everyone. I'd like to call the meeting to order. We're waiting for some of the tardy but we're not going to wait any longer, I don't think.

We're very pleased to have Commissionaires Nova Scotia here today to do a presentation but we have some housekeeping items that we need to deal with, one in particular with regard to some fire alarm business so a representative from Air Canada is going to give us a . . . (Laughter)

**KIM LANGILLE:** Just to mention, so that everyone is aware, the presenters and the guests who are here today, where the fire exits are. If you go back out through the reception area and you look to the left or the right, you will see two exit signs. Just follow those, down the staircase and out of the building, in the event that there is a fire alarm. If you look to those exit signs, you'll also see they will take you to the washrooms if you need those as well. With that, I guess we're good to go.

**THE CHAIR:** Very good. What I'd like to do before we start the presentation is have a round of introductions so perhaps what we would do is ask you gentlemen at the back of the room or down there to introduce yourselves and we'll do the same thing with the committee here in a few minutes.

**COL. BARRY WARK:** My name is Barry Wark and I'm the chairman of our board.

VICE-ADM. DUNCAN MILLER: I'll go next. I'm a retired vice-admiral. Duncan is my civilian name, Dusty was my Navy name, Miller, and I spent 38 years in the Navy. I'm still going strong looking after Commissionaires Nova Scotia. I joined the board about eight years ago, so I am delighted to be a member of the board of governors. I'm the chairman of the Veterans Support Committee, which specifically looks after veterans who are within Commissionaires Nova Scotia.

COL. MICHAEL BROWNLOW: I'm Mike Brownlow, I'm the chief executive officer of Commissionaires Nova Scotia. My background is Navy and actually Admiral Miller, as I used to call him, used to be my divisional officer way back when I was a young sub-lieutenant. I have a background in education and I was also the commanding officer of the Naval Reserves here in Halifax at HMCS Scotian. I've been with the corps for about five years.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

THE CHAIR: What we'll do is go through the presentation, we'll have some questions and answers and probably at about 10:45 a.m. we'll wrap up to deal with some committee business, if that meets with the approval of the committee. Very good, gentlemen you are on now, the floor is yours.

BARRY WARK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First off I'd like to thank the members of the provincial Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs for the opportunity to discuss Commissionaires Nova Scotia and indeed the qualified personnel who make up our division. My name, as I said, is Col. Barry Wark, chairman of our volunteer board. Present today is Col. Mike Brownlow, who is our chief executive officer, and on my right is Vice-Admiral Dusty Miller, who is the chairman of our Veterans Support Committee. We have as well other members of our board of governors present with us today.

To commence, when you look at the slide of this commissionaire, you immediately get the sense of confidence, pride and experience and these are critical traits for any security organization and certainly Commissionaires Nova Scotia are proud to have these commissionaires working throughout Nova Scotia.

Our presentation today will focus on who we are, what we do, the areas where we work and what we want. Commissionaires Nova Scotia delivers quality security services throughout Nova Scotia and to employ a commissionaire requires us to identify work opportunities in both the public and private sectors. This in turn allows our veterans to continue to serve throughout Nova Scotia and to serve our country.

As we go through our presentation you will see a number of testimonials from our clients. In this one you see where John Trickett of Marine Atlantic has summed up very nicely his view of commissionaires. He talks about commissionaires doing the right thing and that, as you know, is a leadership trait. He also talks about commissionaires doing

things right which is the management side of things. So he sees our commissionaires filling both of those sides of employee effectiveness.

Using this as a segue I will now turn over to Col. Mike Brownlow, our CEO, and Mike will cover the answers to the who, what and where.

**MICHAEL BROWNLOW:** Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee. Incorporated in 1937, Commissionaires Nova Scotia is a non-profit corporation providing quality security services by veterans and is, in fact, the largest private sector employer of veterans in Nova Scotia; truly a success story.

Commissionaires Nova Scotia assists veterans to transition to civilian life and earn a reasonable living and 73 per cent of our commissionaires are retired members of the Royal Canadian Navy, Canadian Army, Royal Canadian Air Force, and Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The other 27 per cent of our employees are non-veterans that include retired municipal police, spouses, children, grandchildren of veterans, and members of cadet programs. We occasionally need the additional staff and this group means that we can meet the terms of contracts and create employment for veterans.

Recently, for example, Commissionaires Nova Scotia was asked to provide an additional 20 positions at one of our client sites, but could only identify 12 veterans. We added on eight non-traditional members to meet the contract needs and employ these 12 veterans. Commissionaires Nova Scotia's annual revenue of \$42 million remains in Nova Scotia.

Commissionaires Nova Scotia has 233 contracts, 183 are long term and the remaining 50 are short term; 37 per cent of our contracts are federal and the remaining 63 per cent are commercial. Commercial contracts include municipal, private sector, hospital, post-secondary institutions, ports, and condominiums.

The next slide will give you an idea of the breadth of our client base. Our Parks Canada contracts see commissionaires staffing security positions at the Fortress of Louisburg, Cape Breton Highlands and Citadel Hill. Commissionaires are standing guard at both the provincial Legislature and HRM City Hall. Commissionaires have been familiar faces at the Halifax Harbour Bridge since 1955, the Stanfield International Airport since its inception, and many of the Department of National Defence locations throughout Nova Scotia, some since 1938. Corrections Canada sites, Department of Fisheries and Oceans offices, Coast Guard College, Coast Guard facilities are some of the additional federal government sites employing commissionaires. Thirty-five years ago, Home Hardware opened their eastern Canada distribution centre in Debert with commissionaires guarding their gates, a duty we still perform today.

This slide gives you a small snapshot of the variety of places in Nova Scotia where you will meet our commissionaires. Commissionaires Nova Scotia has four districts with

offices located in HRM, Kentville, Truro and Sydney. The figures indicated on the map show the number of contracts, along with the number of commissionaires employed in each district. In your package is a breakdown of the number of commissionaires living in each of your ridings, the number of contracts and the total number of commissionaires employed in your riding.

Commissionaires Nova Scotia is composed of a unique blend of veterans and non-veterans. Commissionaires bring a wealth of experience, a focus on mission of delivering quality security service; ensuring safe environments; and a proven record of performing beyond client expectations. Our youthful energy combined with seasoned judgment from all walks of life ensures clients are very well served; a trusted relationship between commissionaires and clients. In your package you will find a profile on Major Raina Neville, our site manager at the Department of National Defence here in Halifax who exemplifies these characteristics.

Commissionaires Nova Scotia has the lowest attrition rate in the industry, which means engaged, committed security professionals working for clients and avoiding the significant turnover common in the security industry.

Commissionaires Nova Scotia takes our promise to clients to heart. We seek to add value to our clients' worksites and place emphasis on assisting clients in meeting their vision, achieving their vision and applying their values. Our performance will give clients confidence that they've made the right choice.

The service provided is consistently professional and the guards maintain an excellent relationship with visitors and staff. Edmond MacNeil of Nova Scotia Power sees the added value of quality customer service provided by Commissionaires Nova Scotia.

Commissionaires Nova Scotia provides a full range of professional security service. Many of these services depend on the wealth of skills, abilities and experience our members bring to Commissionaires Nova Scotia.

Commissionaires Nova Scotia is setting up a mobile patrol to work with the international security monitoring company and is expanding our involvement in non-corps policing activities so police departments can free up police officers to provide direct policing service to Nova Scotians. We provide a range of fingerprinting identification services including background criminal record checks and assisting with pardon applications.

Commissionaires Nova Scotia is developing a strategic alliance with Nova Scotia Community College to develop a plan for security training related to the new provincial Security and Investigative Services Act. Commissionaires Nova Scotia is fully engaged with the provincial advisory committee on private security, as well as the security industry

to ensure that any regulated security training is fully accessible, affordable and meets all applicable provincial and national standards.

Quality assurance plays a very important role in how Commissionaires Nova Scotia values due process, due diligence and safety. This has resulted in not only successful audits but an improved safety record and is now imbedded in the corporate culture of Commissionaires Nova Scotia. This has made our offices and worksites more effective and safe. In fact, in 2009, Commissionaires Nova Scotia was awarded the St. John Ambulance White Cross Award by the Workers' Compensation Board. This was in recognition of our efforts in the prevention of workplace incidents, injuries and illness and the implementation of programs and policies that improve the health and safety of our commissionaires. Our clients know that we deliver service and products that meet well-established international, national, and provincial standards.

Annually, Commissionaires Nova Scotia provides dependants of commissionaires with five annual \$1,000 scholarships and most years adds a sixth award, recognizing special circumstances. Periodically, Commissionaires Nova Scotia has provided supplemental funding to the dedicated hospital beds assigned to veterans in Nova Scotia. The remaining 329 beds this year will be getting just over \$16,000. This money is to provide for amenities that otherwise would not be provided through other funding. Commissionaires Nova Scotia has distributed well over \$100,000 over the last 20 years.

The Board of Governors of Commissionaires Nova Scotia has established a special commendation for community involvement to recognize and promote volunteerism in Nova Scotia. The community organizations as represented on the slide are only some of the groups where you will find commissionaires volunteering, fundraising and supporting Nova Scotians in need.

Commissionaires Nova Scotia is one of 17 divisions across Canada that address common issues, have developed a common brand, share best practices, and with 20,000 commissionaires, generate over \$0.5 billion in revenue. Commissionaires Nova Scotia is actively engaged in a variety of local, national, and international associations. These partnerships afford us the opportunity to contribute both to the security industry and the private sector business initiatives.

Yes, Bill Chaisson describes what we do and how we do it in only four words, "Above and beyond. Excellent." I would now like to hand over the microphone to Vice-Admiral Miller.

DUNCAN MILLER: Thank you very much, Mike. Well why are we here? We want to investigate how you can help and how we can help you. I'd like to first say how much we appreciate your interest in the welfare of veterans. We certainly applaud the Government of Nova Scotia for forming the Veterans Affairs Committee and are absolutely delighted that the establishment of a Cabinet Minister to look after military

liaison and matters was made by the government. In fact, the present minister is the Premier, who I know quite well.

You've heard that Commissionaires Nova Scotia's mission is to provide jobs to veterans and former members of the Royal Canadian Navy, Royal Canadian Army, Royal Canadian Air Force and Royal Canadian Mounted Police. It gives me great pleasure to say those terms because it is just fairly recently that they have come back.

Commissionaires Nova Scotia, as you have heard, is, in fact, the largest security provider in Nova Scotia and we provide 1,700 Nova Scotians jobs, from Cape Breton to Yarmouth. All the board members and commissionaires live in Nova Scotia, pay taxes in the province and pump \$42 million into the Nova Scotia economy. We are proud to be an entirely Nova Scotia company. In addition, we are not-for-profit, so that the greatest financial return goes to our employees.

It is in the public's best interest, we think, to have their safety provided by such a quality Nova Scotian agency. Former members of the military and RCMP already have a wealth of security experience so we believe we offer a service second to none. We'd like to explore ways in which you can continue to support us and our veterans, perhaps invite us to attend events in your communities and constituencies, give us a profile, identify opportunities for our services in the public and private sectors that may not have already been identified. We'd be delighted to have your support to help veterans continue to serve their province and country in Commissionaires Nova Scotia.

I'll turn it back to Barry Wark for question and answer section. Thank you very much.

**BARRY WARK:** Thank you very much, Dusty. Ladies and gentlemen, first off I just want to echo Vice-Admiral Miller's comments about how pleased we are to be here this morning and to talk about Commissionaires Nova Scotia and what our commissionaires do in the province. At this point what I'd like to do, with the chairman's permission, is start a dialogue and we'd be pleased to answer any questions you might have.

**THE CHAIR:** Okay, thank you. As per usual, I keep a speakers' list here so if you wish to say something - I see Mr. Porter has already indicated that he would like to start so we'll start with Mr. Porter.

**CHUCK PORTER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen, thanks for your presentation, it was very good. I've known quite a few commissionaires over the years and certainly in my local area. I was a paramedic for 17 years on the streets, we saw them in the hospitals and such.



You had a couple of slides with regard to contracts, you mentioned some long-term and some short-term contracts. Can you explain to us what long term means and how those contracts - are they renewable after so many years, and such like that, and how are those done?

BARRY WARK: I think probably it would be best if I turn that over to the CEO to put the right inflection on that.

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: Yes, the long term are ones that usually come out in requests for proposals from clients and there is certainly a long term to it. For example, the Halifax International Airport, they put out an RFP, we compete like everybody else and that's a long-term one. We have long-term ones, as we indicated in the slides, with the Department of National Defence and so on.

Short-term contracts are ones that basically are either seasonal or, say, there's a construction site going on or a building. For example, we might get a few short-term contracts, hopefully from Alfie MacLeod up in Cape Breton with the Sydney Harbour expansion. That's the kind of thing that we would go after.

The seasonal ones, for example, we've had the Public Gardens as a short-term one, we go up there. As a matter of fact, Angus MacIssac, who used to be the Deputy Minister of Community Services, was a commissionaire and he only chose to work at the Public Gardens, so we have some very interesting people. He just loved to meet with people in the summertime. I think he has a bit of a thing about flowers and so on as well. So those are the short-term ones. We have a short-term one with the Port of Halifax with the cruise ships that come in. So that's the difference, some of them, people who commit for a number of years in an established position, and the short term really relates to either new construction or those kinds of things.

CHUCK PORTER: Thank you. So the long-term contact would be an annual, you would bid and compete 12 months, 24 months.

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: They are usually anywhere from three to five years.

CHUCK PORTER: So the recent change made at Capital District Health Authority is pretty significant, not one that people are happy about. I know a number of the commissionaires, some who have worked there. Of course they are hoping for the very best by the security that is now going to be provided, but I don't think they are probably as confident as the work they were doing themselves. I don't know that there were any issues other than what I'm hearing, the system that they've gone with is supposedly cheaper. I don't know if at the end of the day it will be or not.

How did that all transpire and how were you notified? Was that the end of a contract or did the government just decide, and Capital Health just decide, to end that contract?

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: Well Capital Health put out a request for proposal. They had given us a year extension on our contract to allow them to develop a proper RFP as it is referred to. We applied, like every other company in a competition. Again, because we're not-for-profit and we turn most of our money back to the commissionaires and keep a higher wage, it's difficult to compete.

There weren't any issues. We got glowing letters from Chris Power and other people, praising us for the service we did but basically, as it was explained initially to us, it was a number thing. It was about - the exact figure was somewhere around \$400,000 a year, which is significant, so we understand that. We are waiting for a debrief that we get from the process, however, that debrief has been late, it was supposed to be in August, then in September and now we have one I think scheduled for the 27<sup>th</sup> of this month.

I really can't explain totally to you what the circumstances were. I know that on the last night of the contract my directors and myself, I went down to Windsor, and Cobequid in Sackville and visited the troops. It was a mixed emotions, it was an emotion of people who had been in a place for 14 or 15 years and they were leaving that job. For example, one young commissionaire, we didn't have a place for him, we have been working diligently to get positions for our people, but he found out that same day that his wife lost her job, so the impact is pretty hard on you when you're standing there and you can't offer people jobs. We are working on that.

The other emotion you felt when you were around was feeling very proud of the competencies, excellence and the service delivered by our guys. We got a compliment from the charge of security at the hospital, he sent an e-mail to us to thank us for the professional manner in which we handled the transition and the turnover because that is part of our ethic, professionalism. It certainly was very difficult, it's just one of those things in business - you lose contracts - but, again, we hopefully will learn things from this, we'll learn maybe how to do things a little better and improve our service where we can. Coming here today was exactly that, to reach out to the government and say, if you would understand us better it would increase our profile.

Anyway, we're very proud of what we did at Capital Health, I think we provided a value-added service and unfortunately I think there was a bottom line, but until we have the debrief, that's about all I can say.

CHUCK PORTER: I live in Windsor, so I'm very familiar with Hants Community Hospital. I know from talking to staff there that they were very happy with the service provided and there was a feeling of less comfort, shall we say, and there always would be with changes, they knew what they had with the group of commissionaires, they knew

them well. Of course, when you work there for a number of years together you get to know and have a comfort level with certain people anyway, but we'll hope all goes well there.

You mentioned something a moment ago with regard to the contract. I have two questions maybe you can answer all in one. How many people were displaced by the loss, and you said something a moment ago that kind of caught my ear which was to improve, you almost are making it sound like there was an issue, that you didn't qualify to meet the contract that was written? I just want to be clear on that.

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: Yes, the comment about improve is that in every situation you look to see, could we have done something better and we're always constantly looking to add value to our service? That is what that meant. It wasn't that we weren't delivering good service, just the opposite.

CHUCK PORTER: I didn't take it that way, I just thought maybe, as contracts are written sometimes, there are qualifications and maybe there was something there the group wasn't meeting. I couldn't imagine that after all of those years they weren't meeting it, that's what I wanted to clarify.

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: In fact, the RFP and what the original service agreement, our services that we were presently delivering were way beyond what was the expectation, but that's what formed the new RFP. There was a second part to your question.

CHUCK PORTER: How many people were displaced?

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: Basically the staff is around 73 positions, but you talk about basically 90 people because you have to have your backups. Out of those people who were impacted on it, only five went to the competitor, the remainder decided to stay with us, partly because of the conditions of employment and what we're doing. We had a real struggle to find those jobs and we have found about 53 jobs, we're still looking for others, it's kind of a balancing act. People have said that no, they'll wait and go on - in the teaching profession we used to call it our substitute list - so we have people on that. Again, as we get short-term and long-term contracts, they are given priority, we have a whole system.

Actually our vice-chairman was over here today and our chairman, when we got it we had information sessions, both for the spouses and the commissionaires to come and talk about the impact about it because one of the things that happens in this industry is change, and change impacts people differently and we are very aware of that. We wanted to make sure that we knew that it wasn't just the commissionaire being impacted on, it was the spouses and families, so we had to think about those things. That's just part of our whole social mandate and ethics of the commissionaires, we're like a second family to one another.

CHUCK PORTER: And you folks are generally willing to travel. I know some of them that live in Windsor-Falmouth area and go to the Valley or to the city or wherever they can to pick up a shift here and there. Maybe that's more what the part-timers or those who are substitutes do, I suppose; they travel to get work and I guess as long as it's within an hour circle or something.

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: One of the things we try very much to do is to make sure that if we can get any employment it's within proximity for them because we understand there's a cost to travel, so we want to make sure we deal with that.

CHUCK PORTER: Thank you very much and we really appreciate what you guys do out there so keep up the great work.

BARRY WARK: If I could just build on some of the CEO's comments, in particular your last point. In the big picture, Nova Scotians who serve in the military have a great desire to come back home, and they come back home to a lot of places in Nova Scotia. One of the difficulties we have is matching the skills, abilities, and talents of those veterans to where the jobs are. So if you think back to the map that we had on the wall a little while ago, we're pretty much clustered in communities but we have some towns - for example, Antigonish - where we don't have commissionaires employed. One of the reasons we're here today is that idea of awareness; who commissionaires are, their talents, their abilities and Nova Scotians do come back home so if we can find employment throughout Nova Scotia it will really be a grand help for us.

THE CHAIR: Very good. Mr. Bain.

KEITH BAIN: Thank you for your presentation this morning. I'm just going to continue on my colleague's questioning because the same thing that occurred in the Capital District Health Authority also occurred at the Cape Breton District Health Authority as well. I know that on the public's behalf and the commissionaires' behalf, the MLAs questioned some of the administrators at the Cape Breton District Health Authority and I don't think it was ever a question of level of service. At least that was certainly reinforced to us, that it had nothing to do with the service that was provided; it's basically dollars and cents.

I guess where I'm going with this, with all the cutbacks that are taking place within our own government here in the Province of Nova Scotia, departments are being forced to cut back their budgets. That in itself provides an additional challenge to you as an organization. Then on top of that, you have the many private security companies that are out there. I guess having come full circle on this now, I'm going to ask, it's not your level of service, so have you started looking at, well, we know what's happening out there, everybody is cutting back. Have you looked at how you're going to bid better on these jobs? I guess that's one of the biggest challenges that face you right now, I'm assuming. You know better than I.

BARRY WARK: Let me kick this one off and then I'll probably turn it to our CEO. You're absolutely right, we have to learn from our experiences. As we speak, we're working on our first long-term strategic plan and what is the business we want to be in? What do we do well? Where are the work opportunities? From a high level, at a board level, we're asking some probing questions on directionally where should Commissionaires Nova Scotia be going. Maybe with that as an introduction, Mike . . .

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: I'd like to respond to Keith's comments about the quality. There has never been any question of quality. Part of our challenge is that our members become very embedded in the culture and accept the mission. As I mentioned, their mission, vision, and values become ours because we're delivering a service. It basically was a numbers crunch-up in Cape Breton, but Commissionaire Ellis wrote me a letter - he was at Capital Health - and he said one of the problems is that people who are going out to buy security seem to be wanting to accept the illusion of security rather than the fact of security.

Really in truth, it's not just having a warm body that's sitting in a place, it's having someone with competencies and capabilities to deliver the service and because the majority of our commissionaires are veterans, they already come with a lot of those necessary values and experiences and so on. So it is a struggle for us, as the chairman of our board has said. We are looking at how we've done our RFPs - is there a different way we could do it, could we be better at it? We're certainly going to invest a lot of time and energy into that because we've taken two blows which are not easy for us to take so now we have to go back and look.

One of the things that we feel is that it's not looking at maybe all the other causes but let's talk about what we do first, then we can look at the others. We've got a good plan and a good, strong staff to address that. It certainly is sad to lose long-term contracts. The interesting thing is, we lost the contract about 23 years ago to a group that has now evolved into the new group and we were brought in to replace them so you never know, maybe in the next five years it will revisit itself but we'd like it to be a little shorter. Anyway, that can happen.

DUNCAN MILLER: I'd like to say a couple of things. I'm a very passionate emotion-kind of guy, except in a war. I just wanted to say a couple of things about where commissionaires have come from after the Second World War, where there were hundreds of thousands of unemployed service people. Commissionaires was one of those answers to employ them at the time. They paid them a very small wage, just to allow them to get a foot in the door.

Over years as the security situation has changed, I would say dramatically, since the Second World War, the wages - and one of the reasons I am on the board of governors is that I believe our commissionaires deserve a very good wage for what they do and that we

pay them for their quality service and that's what we do. That means that we've got to look at those contracts where our competitors are paying less to their employees and we have had to maintain a standard, which I think you may have misinterpreted Mike's "we've got to improve" - we don't have to improve the way commissionaires do their job.

We have to abide by the International Organization for Standardization, ISO 9001, as you may have heard in the brief. That costs a bit of money to do that. We have to maintain the highest level of security and when I suppose a bid comes out that says we don't need the highest level of security - it is what Mike said, the illusion of security versus the quality of security - then we are in a back seat, to a certain extent.

How do we regain the front seat? Well, we could pay our commissionaires less, which I don't like to think of. Each contract is a little different. What I think we can do is what we are doing right now, instilling in you that we are totally Nova Scotian, so when you get somebody from a company from Europe or China or South America or wherever, that can pay half of what we are paying, are we going to lose that contract or should the Nova Scotia Government take a hard look at where it can make a difference in making sure that Nova Scotia companies make a difference in this province? Thanks.

KEITH BAIN: Thank you very much for that. Just one final question - so I can stop coughing into this microphone and driving some people crazy in there - we spoke about the Capital District Health Authority and the Cape Breton District Health contracts being lost, could you put a dollar figure on what you, as an organization, have lost as a result of those two contracts?

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: Well, I can give the revenue level. What happens is the profit that we would make, to put back into our company, is another matter, that's harder. Presently at the Capital Health we were being paid, I think, \$2.4 million a year. We put in a bid for \$4.1 million. The company got it for a little bit less than that. So out of our general revenue, it's about existing revenue, would be \$2.4 million and out of our anticipated revenue it would have been about \$4 million. Again, the impact of that after you pay for all the salaries and everything else, it is not as much as that but in general revenue, that's what we would have done.

If I could make a couple of points. When I was listening to Vice-Admiral Miller and the chairman, we have a policy in our board that we do everything possible to buy Nova Scotia-made or Canadian-made goods or services, that's our policy. Sometimes it costs us a little more but that's our policy to do that where feasible. The other thing is, the province has very wisely brought in a new minimum wage. I think it's like \$9-something for beginning employees and then \$10. We have been directed by the board to pay above minimum wage and we do. We do not feel that minimum wage really represents what we're asking the commissionaires to do.

The other sad thing about Capital Health is that for the first time in the history of the veterans' hospital, we will not have veterans servicing veterans. The real sad thing about that is not just that we lost the job, but the veterans in those hospitals have lost friends. We received a number of messages from the various patients there and because we have veterans in those hospitals, they understand what a veteran is, and there is camaraderie and a position. That's a real impact; that's a much more unseen impact that happens with this.

The other thing is that in terms of - when the chairman mentioned that we're looking at different things, one of our major initiatives lately is training. We've got a training centre in Burnside and we're pushing forward with some of the initiatives. Jerry MacAlpine - and I apologize for not introducing him earlier - is our business manager and our chief training officer. Jerry and I spent a lot of time together trying to look at different ways that we can service this. One of the things we can do by doing that is we can create some jobs that are very well paying for commissionaires and we're going in those areas because we can pay instructors more, we can pay, in those areas, a little more. The real push behind it is how we can get more money into a veteran's pocket.

The other side of it is that the new veterans coming out are, again, another challenge because the veterans that we have the bulk of come with pensions and medical plans and so on. Our new veterans don't have that; they're coming out after three to six years of service. It is a second career but it's really their only job because they don't have pensions, they don't have medical plans. We're concerned about that and so that's why we need to expand our services and provide other opportunities. The other interesting thing is our new veterans are coming with a totally different set of skill-sets. They're into that computer stuff and everything is now - I don't think I'd be able to find the proper dials to push on a ship now with all the changes. The new veterans provide us with a unique challenge and that's why we have to change the way we do things. When I said, "improve", we have to improve on the opportunities we provide for veterans.

DUNCAN MILLER: I just want to say a couple of things as well on that. One of the members on my committee - we have five - is Lieutenant-Commander Heather MacKinnon, Retired; she was actually the medic officer in the Persian Gulf when we were there with the three ships. She has come back into civilian life and specialized in veterans' medical problems and she sees a real need for those who are suffering - the new veterans - whether it's post-traumatic stress disorder or an amputated limb or a psychological problem. She is on the committee just to ensure that we always remember that they need more help and we should be able to provide that help within our organization. That's one of the reasons we have a committee specifically looking at the new veterans: what they are, who they are, where they need help and how we can employ them meaningfully so that they get better as opposed to not get better. I just want to put that in front of you.

BARRY WARK: Maybe if I could, Mr. Chairman, just build on that for just a moment. Your questions have allowed us to put really the human face on our commissionaires. As we talked earlier about finding jobs within Nova Scotia, I think it was

said earlier, in another life I was a human resource professional and one of the most difficult things you ever have to do is tell somebody they don't have a job; finding contracts and then putting the commissionaire or the veteran into that role and then at some point in time saying that role is no longer there and we don't have a job for you. When we went through that a little while ago here in the Halifax area we had commissionaires who really did put a face on that - I have a family and now I don't have a job. It really brings home to us what the CEO was discussing, the importance of getting very good at bidding on contracts, but also helping the general community to know who we are. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Mr. Gaudet.

HON. WAYNE GAUDET: Mr. Chairman, I want to thank our guests this morning for their excellent presentation. I want to focus on the people who are working for you. You've indicated in your presentation that 73 per cent of the jobs are taken by former military or RCMP. I'm just curious, do you actively recruit among these people who are about to retire or do retirees contact your organization for employment?

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: We have an HR department that looks after all of our recruiting and yes, we are very assertive and sometimes aggressive in recruiting. We have a relationship with the military and as people are getting out of the military they have what they call SCAN seminars and we present on those. We keep sending out information to the various elements of the Royal Canadian Navy, the Air Force, the DND and the RCMP. In fact, we just had a young lady on our course who is a retired RCMP officer from British Columbia and she said that during her out-routine with the RCMP, they recommended her to check in on commissionaires. She was moving back here to Nova Scotia, she did and now we've got her working at the airport. We do some advertising in the various papers like the Trident and other military magazines. We talk to Legions, we talk to any veterans associations, we're always out there looking for them.

I can tell you that the best recruiters we have for Commissionaires Nova Scotia are commissionaires, the word of mouth. We have people who were commissionaires, have left us and have come back. We have an eight-day training course, all of our commissionaires are trained eight days and that is the longest period of time of any security training anywhere. The reason we do that is we want to make sure that they have all the skills associated with being in the security business, which is different from being a policeman, sailor or soldier.

What we do with these people is, I introduce the course and go in to speak to them and look at the variety of people there. We've had everyone from a Ghana police detective to an ex-Anglican Archbishop. The teachers on the committee here would appreciate that you walk into a classroom and you have a 19-year-old, who's just out of Ravensberg training school, and you have an 84-year-old and we train them. We have no age limit, we're not an age-discriminating company. As long as you're healthy and able to do your job, we don't turn any veteran away.



The variety of people and the skills - in your package is a glimpse of one of our commissionaires, Raina Neville. She exemplifies and is an example of the quality of the people we have. So the answer to your question is, yes, we do recruit them and we're very aggressive in the way we do it.

WAYNE GAUDET: Is there a big turnaround in your staff?

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: No, we have probably the lowest turnaround, we do have the lowest attrition rate - as I indicated in my slides - of any security organization. We are anywhere around 15 per cent to 20 per cent where the average is about 45 per cent to 50 per cent, so it's quite remarkable. That is why at Capital Health the people got to know the security guards and developed a relationship because it was the same person every day. Well any other security company, because of whatever reasons - difference in pay or whatever - there is a traditionally high rate of turnover. That impacts on the quality of service but it also impacts on the comfort that the client feels. When the clients come in and they know it is the same person, they have that relationship. That is unique with us.

WAYNE GAUDET: Looking at the 27 per cent who are non-veterans, are most of these people retirees from their work?

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: Yes, we have a fair number of Halifax Regional Police, for example, or the Cape Breton police services. We have English bobbies, all kinds of people. We also take people who have had five years of security training as well, and then the spouses and the grandchildren. They sometimes also bring different kinds of skills. We look at them and whether or not they can meet the criteria of being a security person and a commissionaire. Part of our training also is indoctrination into the commissionaires and who we are.

WAYNE GAUDET: I'm just curious as far as the breakdown of male and female. What is the percentage, as far as female commissionaires?

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: Well our percentage of females is around 18 per cent. That has grown over the last number of years. About five years ago, that was 10 or 11 per cent so we've increased the number of females.

Our numbers of identified Aboriginal and African Nova Scotian, I don't have exact percentages but our corps is pretty reflective of the community that we live in.

WAYNE GAUDET: One final question, you indicated that you provide fingerprinting services, I'm just curious, where? Here in HRM or province-wide?

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: Not too far away, just at the Maritime Centre. We provide them there, which is where the passport office is located, then we provide them in our three district offices, in Sydney, Kentville and Truro.

WAYNE GAUDET: Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR: Ms. Raymond.

MICHELE RAYMOND: Thank you very much, and I apologize for arriving late but I hope I caught most of your presentation. In speaking to members of the Legislature you are obviously speaking to people who are very familiar with the commissionaires and the people who work at the Legislature are very much part of the family for all of us. I think we know very well how important an element to the culture it is.

I think, too, the fact that historically you have been veterans and you have been people coming from a second career probably does give you sort of that senatorial aspect, I think, that many people sort of expect a certain level of experience, maturity, the courtesy that comes from that. I hope that's something that is reflected in people's perception of you.

I don't know, I mean periodically different organizations will do sort of censuses and surveys on what professions are most respected and so on. Have the commissionaires been looked at in that way at all?

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: It's interesting, we have just, through our national office, we've contracted Environics to do a complete study of the various stakeholder groups, including clients, the general public, commissionaires. It's a major project that is going on right now just to determine those kinds of things.

We have a client survey, every year it goes out to our clients, that we analyze, both to identify situations that they might feel we could do a little more for them and so on. We're constantly looking at that because that's important. John Boileau, who is sitting over there, one of our board members, is on a group called the National Grassroots Joint Government Relations Committee, that is looking at that very thing about connecting with our leaders, our politicians at all levels and trying to get that public perception. Unfortunately, some people tend to say it's that older guy sitting at the desk, okay, and just because I just became a senior citizen I said hold on now, there's nothing wrong with that. So we're very conscious of that.

You'll see the package in front of you, you can see some of the work, the slides that we presented to you are part of the work that's between what we're doing here in Nova Scotia and also our national group. So yes, we recognize it and thank you for thinking of that because yes, we're doing that right now.

MICHELE RAYMOND: I think it probably is part of the general public's perception and so on and it may be one of those things that sort of leads into, feels more sort of community development and so on. I noticed that you spoke of the board of governors commendations that you have for members, I take it, who are involved in various - essentially community development organizations and scouting and so on. I would think that there is probably a huge vacuum there so that's very, very welcome.

The other thing that I was - well I guess a couple of things. You mentioned airport screening - is there anything which actually prevents you from becoming involved in the sort of brass tacks airport security screening contracts or are you involved in these?

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: Yes, what happened is CATSA - the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority - put out an RFP, a request for proposals, about a year or so ago and there were certain qualifications around that. They divided the districts up into an eastern district, which included Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces. Different divisions across the country took the lead. In the eastern side, Quebec took the lead because it was a language thing, so we bid, as part of a group of divisions, with Montreal leading the division. Unfortunately we weren't successful. It was a very high-pitched learning curve for us in that one just to find out because those are very - they're talking \$364 million. Well you know that's almost 10 times our revenue so you look at what that means, that's huge, those contracts.

Securitas were the successful bidders for here but we spent quite a long time developing intelligence on it and getting ready and making what we felt was a very good proposal. The people in CATSA felt that it didn't quite meet their needs and like everything else in business, you win some and you lose some. We would have been very pleased to have been able to do that but no, we're not.

MICHELE RAYMOND: And in the western division, the same?

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: The commissionaires used to be delivering services in, oh, the Quebec airport, the smaller one.

MICHELE RAYMOND: Definitely not doing it in Montreal.

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: Anyway, we lost those. We're not anywhere in CATSA now.

MICHELE RAYMOND: Is that potentially, I mean in the future?

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: Well again we would look at that, the contract is five years so after five years we'd probably get ready to try it again.

MICHELE RAYMOND: That seems like a very serious loss. I guess I'd better turn it over. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR: Ms. Zann.

LENORE ZANN: Thank you so much for coming in today, gentlemen, all of you. It's very interesting to hear what you have to say. It was interesting yesterday in Truro we had the portraits of the fallen, the Portraits of Honour Tour, and I was able to be there and unveil it in Truro. It was very moving. Were any of you there yesterday? I didn't see any of you there.

A number of people there, some of the guys who were on motorcycles and wearing all their different badges very proudly and it was very interesting to see the face of veterans and how it has changed over the years. I was just curious, are you noticing that any of the people who are coming on board now with your organization, are they having any kinds of different difficulties than what you were used to before? I know there's a lot of post-traumatic stress, you would think that would be the same throughout the years, with people coming home from war. Is there anything in particular you are noticing that is a difference now than what you have dealt with before?

BARRY WARK: Let me start on that one. A few years ago we commenced an Employee Assistance Program, our EAP program. So by some measure that is a vehicle for our commissionaires to seek help. Of course that's all confidential so, as a board, we do get reports on the type of things that our commissionaires and their families are faced with. We haven't had that EAP in place long enough to get any sort of trend lines. Beyond that, from a statistical point of view, that's where we are today but Mike, you may want to add to that, or Dusty.

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: We do have nationally a memorandum of understanding with the Department of National Defence to provide job entry programs for military people with post-traumatic stress syndrome. For example, one of our commissionaires that we brought on board was a bomb disposal expert, and lives up in the Sydney area. Through that program, we introduced him into the commissionaires and he was able to develop enough of the work skills and working in a civilian atmosphere at Marine Atlantic that he was then offered a position in another industry in Cape Breton. He liked the commissionaires so much that he stayed. So we are looking at it. When the Department of Veterans Affairs, these persons are identified with DND, we have job entry programs that we work with them so we do that as well.

DUNCAN MILLER: I think I would answer in a way that is perhaps a little different but technology, I believe, has made a huge difference with respect to the kinds of veterans that we're seeing come out of the military. They are highly technically qualified. They are into IT, they are into surveillance technology, they can fix a television set or a DVD. You name it, they can do it.

A security organization has also changed in that regard, too, so we are able to monitor things with cameras and that reduces the overall number of people you might have but increases the requirement for smart, technically qualified people. I guess if I've seen anything from the military, that is where I would see the biggest difference in today's veteran, as opposed to one 20, 30, 40 or 50 years ago. To me that is what we have to look at as a board as well, how we move into the technological century in security, as well as bring on these new veterans who are younger, who don't have a pension, who may have a disability but are sharp as a tack and we want to employ them.

LENORE ZANN: Thank you, and did you say that you go out actively looking for people or do they find you?

DUNCAN MILLER: No, I think it's really both. We do actively, when Mike mentioned the SCAN, Second Career Assistance Network. They have a two-day session and they bring in industry, companies, we're always there saying here, this is what we provide, this will get you on your feet if you need something interim or if you want a career, here's what we have in Commissionaires Nova Scotia, so we do actively do that.

I personally have been called by I'd say at least a dozen who either sailed with me, served with me and said, what about commissionaires? So I give them my pitch, saying what do you want? Where do you want to be employed? What kind of job do you want? Well here's where I think you should go and yes, go down to the commissionaires head office and say, here I am and Miller sent me, and they get a job, or they don't - it depends on whether the match occurs. I think it's a bit of both and that probably answers your question, too.

LENORE ZANN: I noticed that Shannex is one of the companies. Are you only working at the one, Harbourstone, or is there an opportunity there for more people? Shannex seems to be going up right across the province really.

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: No, we work at several Shannex.

LENORE ZANN: That's good. That's probably going to be growing, with our aging population. I feel really bad about the Capital Health situation. Just reading over some notes here, it does seem to be about money, unfortunately. The job was taken by Paladin and they are actually Canada's largest supplier of health facility security so I guess they have a lot of experience, but again, numbers sometimes, it's hard to fight against a company that has so many people working for them. Apparently the cost was 50 per cent less than the previous contract, so \$3.63 million versus \$7.3 million. Is that anywhere near right?

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: No, that's totally wrong. The numbers that you've got there were originally handed out and we sent a protest letter to Capital Health. Then Capital

Health came back and apologized; and then you get a small correction in the newspaper, so people don't get it. The truth of the matter is the contract for security at Capital Health prior to the new one was \$2.4 million paid to Commissionaires Nova Scotia and \$0.6 million paid to a group called Armack who did the Nova Scotia Hospital and other facilities.

These are the only figures I do have and these were given to me by the Director of Procurement. Paladin's bid was approximately \$3.6 million and a 23 per cent increase from what it was paying before. Our bid was \$4.1 million, which would have been about a 32 per cent increase from what they were paying. The reason that was our bid was that the new RFP had increased the responsibilities that were already in the contract, so our bid was based upon what we felt we could best deliver to the services and based upon our experience in the hospital and knowledge - things like overtime and other things you can get into - that we felt that this was a legitimate bid and we reviewed that bid.

So, in fact, it was that false number that came out that also caused me to write a letter to the editor to explain that this was not about quality, this was simply about finances. In fact, I'm not surprised that you mentioned that because that was one of things that our heart just went, that's not true, we weren't that way out.

LENORE ZANN: Well, thank you very much for correcting that, I appreciate that. Thank you so much, I really appreciate it.

THE CHAIR: Mr. Epstein.

HOWARD EPSTEIN: Thank you all for the presentation today. It has really been highly educational for all of us. In my constituency, which is essentially a residential constituency in the centre of the Halifax peninsula, I have a lot of active service personnel and some retired military personnel as well. I didn't know that I had 41 commissionaires living there so thank you for that sheet, that is a useful piece of information.

I wondered if you could help me understand first a bit about the actual formal structure of the commissionaires, both in the province and nationally. Many of us who don't have direct involvement simply see you at work and are, of course, very happy with our experience. Indeed, one of the essential elements of it is continuity. We see it - as my colleague pointed out - at Province House all the time, there are people we get to know.

I was curious about the formal structure of the organization. I saw some reference to, I think, 17 divisions and I'm not sure what was meant by that. Presumably that means across the country there are 17 divisions. What I don't know are things like whether the commissionaires are established by a piece of legislation. They were described, for example, as a non-profit, but I don't know if that means that you're registered as a non-profit or whether you actually have a Statute somewhere that establishes you. I don't know about the national governing body. I don't know what constitutes membership in the organization. I'm not sure how people end up on the boards. I'm not sure what the local

provincial divisions, if they are provincial divisions, do and what their powers are related to the national body. There's a reason I'm asking this, but perhaps I could get some basic background information along those lines to start.

BARRY WARK: There is an awful lot in what you're asking so I'll ask my colleagues to help out here. You referred to a Statute. I think in Nova Scotia, we may be a one-off that Commissionaires Nova Scotia is established by a Statute; I think it is 1955. I think most of the commissionaire divisions - the other 16 - are formed under the Companies Act. So we are different in that and we're fairly proud of that because it gives us, within the overall structure of the 17 divisions that report into a national office in Ottawa - and reporting is too strong a word - it's a national office not a headquarters from our perspective. We are proud of our autonomy, we're proud of being called Commissionaires Nova Scotia.

Within Commissionaires Nova Scotia we do have a board and there are 16 board members. We have a fairly stringent process whereby people come on the board, a selection process and so on. For the structure we do have a board, the board has a chairman and we function by committees which works very well. As a board, we have one employee and that's our CEO and he has a structure, the common elements of operations, human resources and finance. As he pointed out on the slide, we have divided the province into four regions with four offices. There is a very flat organization under the CEO to keep our overhead down.

HOWARD EPSTEIN: I'm assuming it's a membership-based organization in some way, is that right?

BARRY WARK: I'm not sure I understand the question.

HOWARD EPSTEIN: For people to go on the board, it seems to me there are a couple of possibilities, one is the board is sort of a perpetuating, self-selecting organization in which it reaches out to other people and invites them on, or there could be an annual meeting in which the members of the organization, if there are members, elect board members. If there are members, there is usually a kind of structure that says to whom membership is open. There might be qualifications, like they might have to be veterans themselves or not, I'm not sure. I'm wondering, is it membership-based?

BARRY WARK: In that sense, if you look at our 16 governors right now, you would find they all have a military background or RCMP. What we have done is looked at our board and said, here are all the qualities that we need - taken holistically - in our board of governors. In our first scan we ask our board of governors to go out and look and say, we have a vacancy and this vacancy requires somebody who has a good understanding of law or maybe marketing and we'll look for that person. Our first scan would be whether we can find that person from the military or RCMP. If not, then we would seek someone outside

that environment and would actually place an ad in the paper to seek that person with the qualities we are looking for.

HOWARD EPSTEIN: Yes, I'll go read the Statute. Thank you, this is helpful, but the reason I was really asking about this was I noticed that I think Mr. Brownlow mentioned there was direction from the board to pay above minimum wage to commissionaires. What I was really wondering about was how it is that employment conditions are set for the individual commissionaires, vis-a-vis the board, so that when you go to bid on a contract - I'm wondering what drives the decisions that you make, in terms of the bids you put in. I'm wondering if I could hear a little bit more about that.

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: As the chairman mentioned earlier, what the board does is develop a strategic plan. Those kinds of issues, saying you've got to be paid above minimum wage, all those issues are looked at and discussed with the board to see okay, here's an opportunity. The main drive behind everything is to find the best-paying and putting as much money into the pocket of the commissionaire as possible.

HOWARD EPSTEIN: I'm certainly not critical of that; it's a very good idea, absolutely.

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: What happens is already the board has different policies that I have brought up to the Strategic Planning Committee that I'm saying well we're in business and maybe we need to look at this. There is a continued dialogue between myself and the board in a very consensus-building and co-operative way. The board provides the expertise, we have not just retired people, we have actually Steve Graham on our board who is the head of the RCMP of Eastern Canada, he is on our board as well.

It's all part of understanding - and it's my job to present to the board what the market looks like - so we work on developing business cases and approaching each other in terms of what kind of resources I need to operate my operation. We have a Human Resources Committee that helps oversee that part of our department. I guess it's part of the board's due diligence and accountability, in terms of running this to make sure that we get the best situation for our commissionaires.

HOWARD EPSTEIN: When you think about contracts that you've either lost or failed to win and you analyze, to the extent that you can, what the successful bids have looked like, I'm wondering where you end up in the comparisons you make between your bids and their bids. For example, if you lose a bid to a profit-making company, that's an element that must be built into their bid somewhere, and you are a non-profit. But, at the same time, if you are paying higher wages than they are then maybe that's the element, or perhaps it's benefits. I'm not sure what your analysis leads you to think. Have you isolated what the particular items are that might account for differences where, really, the bids turn essentially just on the money issue?



MICHAEL BROWNLOW: We are presently waiting, as I mentioned earlier, for a debrief, and I'll just give that as an example, from Capital Health. Once we get that debrief, we'll come back and take a look at what elements and where the client decided that we weren't the right bid. So if it is basically a financial thing then we've got to go back and look at it.

The other companies pay less, we know that, and that's probably where they are able to underbid us. Then we have to step back and ask if our policy of paying above minimum wage is one that's viable in this industry. That's a hard decision. That would be a most difficult decision for us to make. At the present moment, I can't foresee us making that where we look at changes; maybe it's something else. Maybe we are paying too much in some sort of infrastructure, we don't know.

That's the kind of analysis and kind of self-reflection that we need to have. You are quite correct, Howard, that it is important to look at yourself and how you are doing it and how we can do it better.

HOWARD EPSTEIN: Yes, and early on in the presentation, it was suggested by you that we should try and be helpful to one another and that was the spirit in which I am asking these questions.

Can I just ask about the federal rules? It's my understanding there is either a regulation or certainly a federal Treasury Board guideline that really gives commissionaires a right of first refusal on federal security contracts, or in some federal security contracts. I'm wondering if you can tell us a bit about that. My understanding is that it's something that might be confined to the national Department of Public Works and Government Services. Would airports fall outside of that, for example?

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: I mentioned earlier about John Boileau, who is our representative on a national committee. What you're referring to is the National Master Standing Offer. We, as a whole, with all the 17 divisions through Public Works and Government Services - that's who we do it through. They set a rate based upon all kinds of things. One of the problems in the industry is that initially, before we got involved more in the industry, people were saying how unfair this is. Well, it's not unfair because we have to train for those eight days. It's because we're not-for-profit, it's because of whole other reasons. Our whole books and budget is driven by the National Master Standing Offer. It's not so much a freebie because you have to do all those other expenses that normally as a private company you wouldn't have to do.

All federal agencies are required to come to Commissionaires Nova Scotia directly and we don't always take the jobs. For example, the chairman mentioned earlier about Antigonish. There are federal departments in Antigonish, but we have no commissionaires there so we don't bid on those and so that goes to the private sector. The National Master Standing Offer has been in place since 1945 and that was the federal government's

commitment to veterans that they would provide at least that opportunity for them to have jobs. I'm just trying to think if there's anything else about that.

That is reviewed every year and the rates are also based upon provincial situations. For example, in Newfoundland and Labrador, the same security guard job would get more per hour than in Nova Scotia. There are regional disparities.

HOWARD EPSTEIN: I think the federal policy is a very good thing. I was just wondering why it was that in light of that policy you weren't able to get the airport contract. Did it fall outside the ambit of that order?

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: It fell outside. The CATSA could have gone to RFR because they are considered - they've got these various things like, for example, Marine Atlantic. Marine Atlantic we had as a commercial contract, but they chose to move to the NMSO to have more stability in their funding, budgeting and so on and so forth, so they were outside as well. Any government agency, the only people that are required to follow the rule of the RFR are the federal departments.

HOWARD EPSTEIN: Could I ask one more question? Do we have time for that?

THE CHAIR: Yes, I think we can squeeze one more in.

HOWARD EPSTEIN: The last time we encountered each other was when the province was adopting the new legislation with respect to security guards in the province and the security industry. You made a presentation at the Committee on Law Amendments and that was very useful. I'm just wondering how that's going along the lines of what we can do to help each other and I'm wondering how this process is working out now from the perspective of the commissionaires.

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: From the perspective of the commissionaires, anything in the new regulations - and as I indicated to you earlier, I'm meeting with Karen Forsyth who is the Registrar of Licensing. The only challenge for us is that first of all, we were excluded from licensing so now we're going to become part of it, which has made it much easier for us to become a real partner with industry. They don't see us getting exceptions. The only cost to us will be for licensing. Everything we do now in terms of our training, our background checks and everything with our commissionaires exceeds what the regulations will put out. We're not going to change because we're happy the way we're doing business because we have the quality to worry about.

One of the challenges for the government will be the fact that there are 1,700 - or maybe 1,500 - of our commissionaires will have to get licences. Of course, it's now going to be individual licences with mobility and all this kind of thing so the impact on us is going to be minimal. Anne James, our director of human resources, will be negotiating with the Department of Justice to assist with them.

The one thing from the commissionaire point of view, we felt that we could help the industry which I mentioned earlier in one of the slide comments, is that we recognize as commissionaires that the security industry is provided by a whole variety of players, some very large and some very small. They refer to the small ones as the “mamas and the papas” and these are the ones that provide security in the rural areas and so on. One of the things that we were worried about right from the beginning was that this new legislation might impact on their ability to continue as a company if they have to meet all these regulations, the profit margin and all the expenses that would happen. One of the major expenses they would now incur is training standards.

We’re working closely with the government and I mentioned, we are developing a memorandum of understanding with the Nova Scotia Community College to deliver that training as an affordable thing, plus make it available through e-learning modules, as Jerry works on. All the various learning - I know a few educators are nodding here - that’s the way we would approach it.

We also indicated clearly in our discussions that we also have to make sure we have some very good security guards out there in those mamas and papas, and if they all folded it would have a real impact on the safety in our communities. We also looked at some of the education levels of the various security guards and because of that we felt that we also have to have different ways of testing; for example, oral testing as opposed to written testing and those kinds of things. We are considering that whole variety of ways of assisting the government and industry in making a course that is affordable and accessible. You have to understand, if they’re going to take a course, that means they can’t be working while they’re taking the course, so therefore you would have to do training in the evening and that sort of thing, so we’re very conscious of that and if we’re contributing in any major way I would suggest it is by assisting the government with testing and training.

HOWARD EPSTEIN: It’s a big help, thank you.

THE CHAIR: Mr. Preyra.

LEONARD PREYRA: Thank you and welcome to this committee. Certainly on behalf of my constituents - I know we were talking about contracts here - I have certainly seen you around in the community, you and Vice-Admiral Miller and so many great causes and so much volunteer work and I want to thank you for all of that work as well. I know there are a number of commissionaires involved in that capacity in the community as well. Your office is in my constituency and so I am your MLA.

I do want to thank you, you’re very much a presence in our community and certainly in the government itself, the government buildings and in the Legislature and as Michele Raymond said, you’re very much a part of the legislative family. We understand

that kind of intangible connection that commissionaires have with the clients and employer groups you serve.

I had a couple of questions, one of them was already covered by Mr. Epstein, but I may ask it again to get some clarification on it. I want to ask in general about the state of your pension and benefits, I know it's a big issue right across Nova Scotia. How does that work? I know because you're retired veterans there are some benefits and pension arrangements there, but what is the status of that as an employer, how does that work?

BARRY WARK: The legislated benefits, of course, we provide and beyond that we have a life insurance and AD&D which is on a co-pay basis. From a pension perspective, as you know pensions are frightfully expensive, but we have a trust fund that we earn money from which, on an annual basis, depending on how good a year we had, we distribute on an hours' basis among our commissionaires. Of course, we have, as I said, the legislated benefits and WCB and so on.

We tend to focus on a total pay, to look at compensation. We've talked about matching the wage to the skills and abilities that our commissionaires provide, so we try to keep our wage high. If we put more money into the benefits package, it would draw down on that, so it is where the right balance is for our commissionaires.

As has been said, a number of them, the younger commissionaires, come to us without benefits. That's a problem, so we are currently in the midst of doing a study to determine where the commissionaires want that bucket of money that we have, where is the best place to give that? Is it in benefits or is it in wages? So from a total pay perspective, how do we address that? We are studying that at the current time.

LEONARD PREYRA: I'm sorry, I don't understand when you say that the younger members are without benefits. Why does that happen and how does that happen?

BARRY WARK: Well the veteran with 30 years of service, of course, leaves the military with a pension plan and some benefits. The young fellow or gal who leaves at age 30 hasn't had enough service to garner a full benefit plan, so it's the difference between a young and a retiring veteran after a career in the military or the RCMP.

LEONARD PREYRA: So your pension plan then is relatively solvent and stable and you are able to meet your . . .

BARRY WARK: Our pension plan is not funded in a way that you would - it's not like a defined pension plan or a defined benefit or a final average earnings plan. It is simply a lot of money that is annotated for a commissionaire on an annual basis, based on our ability to fund in any year. That accumulates during the commissionaire's service.

LEONARD PREYRA: Thank you. I also had some questions about the right of first refusal. I was intrigued by it and then again, like Mr. Epstein, I was surprised that a contract like the airport contract would not work because it seems like a pretty straightforward proposition.

I am also intrigued by the Capital Health District issues, and certainly want to look more into it to see what happened there. It would make sense that a hospital like Camp Hill would have some kind of right of first refusal for commissionaires. I am very interested in knowing more about that and whether or not that can be developed or why it didn't work at the federal level.

BARRY WARK: Right, that's an excellent question that probably all three of us would like to, if we had the time, Mr. Chairman, just to comment on that. On a national level, the right of first refusal will be under review in 2016, I think. So we really hope that the right of first refusal will be continued. We look upon that as an excellent plan, it has been in place, I believe, since 1945.

I'm glad to hear that you look at that and say, let's learn more about the right of first refusal. It does give us help to identify work and, as Mike said earlier, we come in at a base level there that really helps us in a total pay concept. Dusty, do you want to comment?

DUNCAN MILLER: Sure, it's a hard topic because the right of first refusal in many ways is a blessing and a curse. The blessing is yes, for federal contracts you get the choice to either bid on it or not, as the first person, and you have to pay a certain wage, you have to train to a certain standard, you have to be certified by the government in all these ways. That's going to cost you money but is it worth it? Absolutely.

Also, you have to provide a certain percentage of whoever wins that. When you get that contract, you have to ensure that at least 70 per cent are veterans who are doing it because with the military - when I joined it was 125,000 in the military - we're at 70,000 and at one point a few years ago we were down to 50,000. So you have a smaller pool, a shrinking pool to actually get veterans from to actually meet those kinds of contracts. So in a way it puts some constraints on you that you wouldn't otherwise have.

I like you asking if there is a case for a provincial right of first refusal, and maybe the veterans' hospital is one of those cases that would be very specific and that would actually look at what we provide, and the very special nature of our organization that actually employs veterans to look after veterans may well be one of those areas that we could look at and perhaps discuss in more detail because I think that's a very valid observation.

LEONARD PREYRA: As far as the airport contract goes, have you got a response, in terms of what the issues were relating to that contract? Have you followed up, in terms of

discussions with the federal government to the relevant Cabinet Ministers? This is a Public Works and Government Services issue, is it? It's not a DND issue?

MICHAEL BROWNLOW: You are referring to - there are two contracts out at the airport. There is the CATSA one you are referring to but we also have security, we do this side of the airport security, we do that, so we have that contract and that's done through just bidding and so on.

The CATSA one, it was the Montreal division that was the bidder so they are the ones who are going to get the full debrief from CATSA. In November, they'll be giving us a briefing in Ottawa about the total details of what happened. I'll certainly make note here to maybe let you know what happened with that.

CATSA is where you get those problems where you have agencies that are formed by government but then operate at an arm's length from government, so they don't necessarily operate with the same rules as if they were a government agency; they are supposed to but - whatever. The CATSA ones - as we know, CATSA was created after 9/11 and all the other things that happened and then they really became a very large organization. Until we get that debrief, I can't say anything specifically, other than the other bid was either lower or was a more comprehensive bid, I can't comment. The same thing with Capital Health until we get the debrief on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

One of the things I would mention is that we've also taken time, because we've looked at this and we've had some varied discussions, and some heated ones, about this around the table in this sort of thing but we've looked at the provincial procurement policy and it's a very fair and unbiased policy, it's a very good policy. There are parts of that policy that possibly could say that you can get preferential treatment or some consideration. So to me, the fact that we do hire veterans, is that a factor? Well, right at the moment it's not, it was never considered as a factor.

The fact that we deliver this kind of quality service, was that a factor? Unfortunately, obviously from our perspective, no; it was the bottom line. So I go back to my original comment of if you want the fact of security then you have to look at the quality. Sometimes if you purchase not the same kind of quality product you might pay more in the future. I was trying to tell my son who bought a second-hand car, look at a brand new one and you'll save yourself some costs, that kind of thing.

It is something, and the fact that you brought it up I think is quite refreshing and gives us some opportunity to discuss this further.

LEONARD PREYRA: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Very good, gentlemen, we have time for a few closing comments if you wish, you can do so.

BARRY WARK: Well, I'd like to turn back to Dusty for a minute because maybe a half hour ago we had a question. Do you remember what that was?

DUNCAN MILLER: No, but I was wanting to answer a question about the quality of service and the relationship we have with our clients. That is very important to the board of governors so every year there is a client-employee survey. We have an awards banquet every year and we recognize those commissionaires who have done something special. I am always amazed at the bravery, the courage, some that have saved people in Nova Scotia through burning wrecks that weren't part of their job and here they are standing in front of us to be recognized for the wonderful things that they've done.

I think we've got an outstanding, quality Nova Scotia company and what pains me is when you get a company that is headquartered somewhere else, whether it's in Canada somewhere or like I said, China or the United States, I ask you to take a hard look at us as a Nova Scotia-born-and-bred company, independently organized from the 17 divisions and quite rightly so. We're partly like a federation of Canadian provinces, we each have our autonomy in certain areas, but we recognize that when dealing with the federal government, we have to have a federal national office that actually looks at the right of first refusal and the federal contracts that come up on behalf of all of us. As you heard, a bunch of us went into the CATSA airport one but didn't win because that bunch has to look at itself maybe in a different way than another kind of security competitor will look at itself.

My closing comments are, you've really asked some great questions. You have gotten to the core of what we are - pardon the pun - but to me a fabulous opportunity for veterans, former serving military and RCMP members to become an employee of the Corps of Commissionaires Nova Scotia. The board of governors are really the members. It's not a whole public company, the members are the board of governors, the employees are those 1,700 that we actually employ, so that's where the board of governors actually elects the next member from. We have a highly competitive process, we had five people for two slots the last time, to ensure that we get legal, financial, all three services, and the RCMP represented on the board of governors. We're becoming more and more busy because it is a busy business and we are volunteers; we don't get paid a cent. Why am I doing it? Because I believe in the military, I believe in those coming out of the military having jobs and in a small way we can do something about that. Thanks.

BARRY WARK: Thank you very much, Dusty. Maybe if I can just close out, Mr. Chairman. First off, thank you once again for the opportunity for us to be here this morning to talk about our favourite topic, Commissionaires Nova Scotia and our commissionaires. If I may, maybe it might not be our last meeting. Again, echoing Vice-Admiral Miller's comments, we really appreciate the in-depth, probing questions - they were very good and I appreciate that.

We do have very qualified commissionaires and one of the things that we're struggling with, as you now know, is in matching the quality and worth of our product to what the client is prepared to pay. We talked about the RFR - Right of First Refusal - and just elated that that did come out and maybe there is something in all of that. We want to find employment for our commissionaires throughout Nova Scotia and we know that you can now help us. Once again, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. I would like to thank you for your presentation today and I certainly would like to thank my colleagues for their questions and certainly you've acknowledged that in your comments as well. So I do appreciate that you did mention the questions and the type of questions that were asked.

I guess at this point we will probably take a very short recess so you folks can gather your belongings and then we'll get onto the committee business. We won't bore you with that.

[10:44 a.m. The committee recessed.]

[10:48 a.m. The committee reconvened.]

THE CHAIR: We're going to start again with regard to committee business. I think probably the most efficient way of doing this is to get Kim to go through this section and we'll deal with the first item there, Distribution of Information.

KIM LANGILLE: I put that on there. At a committee meeting some time ago, there was discussion about the amount of information that we get and how many times you get it and all that. What I've been trying to do - I don't know if anyone has noticed - is we have a scanner in the office now so when information comes in, I've been scanning it and then just electronically sending it to everyone. Then when we have our meeting, I have hard copies here in case anyone wants to refer to it. I just want to check to make sure that everyone is happy with that system or not.

MICHELE RAYMOND: That works great for me and actually I would be very happy just to not receive Hansard in hard copy, but if you could even just send me a notification on e-mail link that it's now up.

KIM LANGILLE: That's my next item actually. A number of other committees have sort of gone that way, just to send an e-mail around to people to say the Hansard is up now, if you'd care to look at it. I guess some people do refer to it but I get the impression that perhaps it's a lot of copies for perhaps no good reason. So it's up to the committee what they would like but I'd like to have a decision to apply to everyone, if at all possible.

CHUCK PORTER: The less amount of paper, the better.



THE CHAIR: I don't think we necessarily need a motion, a consensus on this item would be fine. Do we seem to have consensus? Okay.

Correspondence - Kim, do you want to . . .

KIM LANGILLE: Yes, this sort of goes against what we just said, but when we haven't met for some considerable time, our last actual official meeting was in March so a lot of correspondence has come in over that period of time. I've tried to sort of attach it here just so that people could see what is there, should there be any issues that need to be followed up on from that correspondence.

The first piece is from Mr. Griffis. He often sends in information and you'll see there that he sent in a copy of Bill C-55, just for your information, so I assume that there's really nothing that needs to be done on our behalf with regard to that.

Then we go down to - from the February 10<sup>th</sup> meeting there are a number of motions and letters requested to be written and information. All the copies of the correspondence that we received are there. Again, they may not have been the responses perhaps that we wanted but we did get responses and unless there's something that someone believes needs to be followed up on, we'll just accept them as received by this committee.

THE CHAIR: Any comment on this bit of correspondence from the February 10<sup>th</sup> meeting?

CHUCK PORTER: Maybe as these come out, and a timesaving idea is now scanning them, sending us in a way of comments on them maybe to send them back. Hit "reply all" if we wanted follow-up correspondence or something. It's just that given that we are living in this electronic world, albeit days like yesterday aren't the best but it doesn't happen very often.

I know it's easy for me to grab this thing and go click - you know what, here are my thoughts, it goes to the committee members, we do nothing with it, we file it, thank you very much, or maybe we need to have further discussion at the next meeting and we just move that forward. It saves you time trying to prepare all this as well. I know the committee is busy but I don't know, just a thought. I'm not interested in a whole bunch of paper, faxes or e-mail or whatever but electronically it is great. We can file it accordingly in our office on an electronic file and save it, bang, you are done.

LEONARD PREYRA: Maybe one member from each caucus.

CHUCK PORTER: Oh yes and again, I'm not suggesting, I've argued this forever. We all get these packages, one is plenty, in my opinion. If we're going to get something in hard copy, one is plenty.

KIM LANGILLE: Ms. Raymond just mentioned, perhaps instead of sending it electronically, whatever correspondence comes in we just hold until we meet and then it is reviewed there and if there is any comment, we deal with it.

MICHELE RAYMOND: That would be better for me because quite honestly, I'm not really thinking about it that much anyway.

KIM LANGILLE: Well whatever works for the committee is what we'll do.

WAYNE GAUDET: I like your suggestion.

KIM LANGILLE: So when correspondence comes in, whether the meeting is a month away or three months away, we'll hold it and it will be reviewed at that time. Is that what we're agreeing to?

THE CHAIR: So we have consensus on that item? Good. Next.

KIM LANGILLE: Now this one is a bit more complicated. The Legion has been in several times, of course, and made presentations. When they were in, back in February I think it was, they gave a presentation having to do with the condition of their buildings. Then they talked about a couple of other additional items. One was - there were two items from when they had appeared back in November 2009, believe it or not, that they wanted followed up.

One had to do with the cookie jar tax. The committee dealt with that and they made a motion and another letter was sent off because there was a feeling that we hadn't actually asked the precise question that they had wanted answered, so that was looked after. The committee made a motion and another letter was sent.

The other issue that they still had concern about had to do with veterans' disability pensions and the fact that when the Department of Community Services is calculating income for social programs, they include that as income and they have an issue with that. We had done a letter for them with regard to that. The letter came back, and again, it was a similar issue to the cookie jar tax. There was concern by committee members that, well, did we really ask the proper question to get the proper answer? They brought that up and it was talked about in the committee but no motion was made to say, yes, we need to follow up on that. That's really why I'm bringing it back here again. We received the letter from the minister, which really didn't address the concern that they had so in order to do that we need to go back to them. It wasn't brought to a motion so nothing happened on it.

THE CHAIR: Mr. Porter.

CHUCK PORTER: I was just going to say with regard to these letters being sent and responses coming back, are these cc'd to the individual, i.e. the Legion this time?

KIM LANGILLE: When they are received they go back to, yes.

CHUCK PORTER: So, for example, Veterans Affairs Canada have written us back, obviously, but would they have copied the Legion branches?

KIM LANGILLE: Not necessarily, but I do send copies out.

CHUCK PORTER: So they are aware of the current situation. We've not heard from them again by way of another action, right?

KIM LANGILLE: Correct. That's my understanding.

CHUCK PORTER: Maybe until we do - I mean, they are aware of the current status. It's probably not much more than they expected to begin with. We'd hope for more but, unless they come back to us with another action, I don't know what we would . . .

KIM LANGILLE: Well, I think the issue is that we didn't ask the right question and that's what they were trying to get at when they came in. You sent a letter but you didn't really address what the issue was.

CHUCK PORTER: To that very point, I'm just thinking are they then at the Legion - Dave Blanchard or somebody - writing us back and saying, well look, committee, you didn't really ask the question, can you write another letter?

KIM LANGILLE: They didn't but they brought it up at the meeting to say, look, you haven't addressed the question that we really needed to be addressed. That's where it sort of fell down.

MICHELE RAYMOND: In what meeting was that brought up? Is this in Hansard?

KIM LANGILLE: That was way back in February.

MICHELE RAYMOND: So is there something in Hansard, which should have been followed up with a motion?

KIM LANGILLE: There wasn't; that's the issue. It was sort of talked about.

MICHELE RAYMOND: Can you point out what that is?

KIM LANGILLE: I don't know if I have a copy of the Hansard here with me. Bear with me a second. Actually, I do.

THE CHAIR: I guess what you're asking is, what is the question they're asking? I think there are some of us that are new to the committee.

MICHELE RAYMOND: Yes, what do they want asked?

KIM LANGILLE: Basically, with regard to this pension, it's a very specific pension and the way our letter was written, I think they inferred it to me that we were talking about pensions in general, not this specific pension that's paid under the Pension Act itself. We're not talking about military veterans' pensions per se. This is a specific disability pension that is only paid to certain members and it has been discontinued since 2006.

MICHELE RAYMOND: Did the Legion send this question back in writing?

KIM LANGILLE: No.

MICHELE RAYMOND: Oh dear. They should really write to us and say, look, we appreciate your letter but it doesn't address this question, and then we'll re-forward it.

THE CHAIR: Okay, Kim you could contact them.

KIM LANGILLE: Yes.

THE CHAIR: So that settles that. Go ahead, Kim.

KIM LANGILLE: From the March 10<sup>th</sup> meeting, again, there were a number of letters that were written as a result of that; they're all listed there. There is one letter that has yet to be received from one federal minister so unless - I don't know if there's anything that needs to be addressed with regard to that correspondence that has been received.

WAYNE GAUDET: We have received copies of these?

KIM LANGILLE: Yes.

WAYNE GAUDET: So what is your point?

KIM LANGILLE: In case someone has any comment, that they're not satisfied with the response or that sort of thing.

THE CHAIR: Any comments or questions? We'll move to the next item and that would be the meeting schedule during the House session. The question that needs to be asked is, do we want to meet during the House session or not?

CHUCK PORTER: I would just add, as we always do, I think it really depends on House hours being set and it has basically been at the call of the chairman. Otherwise we set them aside, generally speaking, during the House. I know it might only be from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., but there is preparation time, et cetera, caucus is generally meeting beforehand. Other than HR, I don't know of any other committee that generally meets and that's only for appointments as a rule during House sitting, other than the Public Accounts Committee, I should say.

THE CHAIR: Is there consensus on this?

CHUCK PORTER: We're open to whatever, but usually that's where we're at with it.

THE CHAIR: Is this what folks would prefer? Okay, that's fine, very good.

The next item is the selection of witnesses. You should all have this in front of you. We have PTSD and the Veterans Emergency Transition Services that are noted here as well - just down below here on your agenda. Mr. Gaudet, I guess you brought in the Veterans Emergency one?

WAYNE GAUDET: Yes, I brought two, Mr. Chairman. The Veterans Emergency Transition Services, I spoke with Jim Lowther about the homeless veterans in Nova Scotia. I was kind of shocked hearing that and I thought it would certainly be an interesting topic to be presented here at some point, so I just wanted to submit that one. The second topic that I wanted to submit is Call to Remembrance. Keith Colwell pointed this out to me that there are some Legion members that he knows that are going to schools, especially in October and November, to talk to students. According to him, they would certainly be interested in coming over to make a presentation in terms of what they say, what they share and what kind of questions they field from students, so I just wanted to submit that as well.

THE CHAIR: Okay, very good. Actually, the Veterans Emergency Transition Services - Mr. Burrill also indicated that was a topic of interest for him as well. Is there consensus, we'll add those?

HOWARD EPSTEIN: Is post-traumatic stress disorder on the list?

THE CHAIR: Yes, I'm assuming we're going to add those.

HOWARD EPSTEIN: Fine.

KIM LANGILLE: Well, actually, post-traumatic stress has been on there for a while and Ms. Raymond was going to sort of see what she could find. There was a specific program that she was interested in of which she sent some information. In the information it indicated there was an attachment, there was no attachment. I went on-line and I did print

some information out, it's called Rivers of Recovery, it's out of the United States. I printed off some information which is in your package for you to look at.

MICHELE RAYMOND: I'll speak to that. This is just an example of one of several kinds of programs which are run in the United States and in various European forces as well. There isn't anything like it being done in Canada, but it is basically sort of an adaptive recovery thing; it's sort of experiential outdoor stuff. It has shown quite a degree of success, it's just something which I think might be of interest. It's probably really something more that Veterans Affairs ought to be looking at as a possibility. They are run more by volunteer organizations in the United States, so I just thought it would be of interest. They are certainly willing to come and speak about it, but as I say, the only people with experience in this is are in the United States, so I don't know whether we have the ability to bring anybody up to speak about that.

THE CHAIR: Mr. Porter, did you have a comment?

CHUCK PORTER: Just a couple of things, I don't know what list you're referring to or information, I didn't get any of that. (Interruptions) The other just on the post-traumatic stress comments, I'm not sure what Michele is referring to by way of the only one was found in the United States. I know from a previous life, in years past here there were organizations, there was one right here in Halifax that provided information, did debriefings, did a variety of things to do with post-traumatic stress. I don't know if they are still . . .

MICHELE RAYMOND: These are more experiential things, these are sort of like outdoor-bound type of things and they are decompression. I know we had had a presentation . . .

CHUCK PORTER: A period of time you go away and do something, is that one? Okay.

MICHELE RAYMOND: Yes, very much in reference to the sorts of things that were being talked about by, excuse me, the former advocate for Veterans Affairs who came to speak with us.

CHUCK PORTER: So is your hope with that to try to have something like that here or to bring it somewhere else or just . . .

MICHELE RAYMOND: Yes, just raise some awareness about it, as I say, these tend to be volunteer foundations, that's all it is. They have shown some success.

One other thing may I add, there's another agenda item which somebody had mentioned. We are invited, as a committee - the HMCS Sackville Foundation would really like it if we would go to visit HMCS Sackville. So I just add that.

THE CHAIR: Do we want to add that to the list as well? Agreed.

I noticed, and I wasn't paying much attention to the time, we're a little over so maybe we need a motion to continue because we have one more item.

LENORE ZANN: I had some questions about other witnesses, too.

THE CHAIR: Okay, do we need a motion again to continue?

KIM LANGILLE: Just agreement.

THE CHAIR: Just agreement, okay, fine. Okay, you go ahead.

LENORE ZANN: Just a question. When I was at the Portraits of Honour yesterday one of the gentlemen who was there with CAV had expressed an interest in talking with us or coming in and having their association talk to us about a couple of things and gave me his card. Can I add it to the list?

THE CHAIR: Sure.

LENORE ZANN: He is actually in Gary Burrill's riding and Gary is away right now, Gary is out West. I told him he could either contact Gary directly, because he is the chairman. That's his card and I think we should follow up with them because they would like to make a presentation. Just add it to the list.

THE CHAIR: Yes, we can add it to the list. Now is there anything else we need to do on the . . .

KIM LANGILLE: Well just getting back to Ms. Raymond's matter, it is on the list, yes. She mentioned about whether or not we'd be able to bring someone up from the United States. We have had people from out of province before, like the Veterans Ombudsman, but that was on his own coin. We do have a very small budget here for our committee but it's usually used for producing the annual report and a hotel room for a witness who is coming, say, from out of town, from Cape Breton or something like that, and parking and that sort of thing.

It would be up to the committee, obviously, but I guess it would depend on what the costs were, perhaps.

CHUCK PORTER: A question, Mr. Chairman. I think that it would certainly be very worthwhile and I'm just wondering, appreciating, Kim, what you are saying budget-wise, given that we are I guess the only other Veterans Affairs Committee in the country, we're a little different than others. Are we able to seek out somehow, and Kim this

is a question for you, funding through other departments, whether they be provincial and/or federal departments through Veterans Affairs that would help bring something like that to Nova Scotia, given that we are a little unique, that would cover that cost, outside of us?

Number two, to go along with that, are there organizations out there that would travel on their dime and come, just in an effort to promote what they do? I'm not sure how many of them there are. I know there are expenses for travelling and such but there are organizations out there sometimes that do travel on their own dime to promote what it is they do, sponsored through any number of means to do just exactly that.

I think it's probably worth exploring a little more, maybe reporting back at a future meeting to see where we can go with that. I'd like to see it, just given that it's a large issue these days so I think we should do it.

WAYNE GAUDET: Why couldn't we explore this with Veterans Canada, asking them if they can provide us with a witness or a speaker on this topic, or extend an invitation to them? They may pick up the coin.

MICHELE RAYMOND: I've certainly spoken to people working with DND and Veterans Affairs. I mean there are post-traumatic stress treatments in sort of more conventional hospital settings and I know they would be very happy to come to speak.

THE CHAIR: Very good. Is there anything else?

KIM LANGILLE: We need to pick witnesses.

THE CHAIR: I'm just wondering if we already had a list of witnesses that we wanted to . . .

KIM LANGILLE: This is it.

THE CHAIR: I guess my question is, do we have anyone confirmed on the list?

KIM LANGILLE: No.

THE CHAIR: Okay, that means we do have to pick some.

KIM LANGILLE: You've used up our witnesses - well, with the exception of the post-traumatic stress issue and what's going to happen there. A recurring issue is the Veterans Affairs Minister - he has been invited, but I recently heard from them that he's not available at the moment. So we can continue to ask, that's kind of why it's highlighted on there, but nothing has been confirmed.

THE CHAIR: Mr. Preyra.



LEONARD PREYRA: Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure what the practice is in this committee, but in other committees the topics are chosen and then the chairman and the clerk seek out suitable witnesses, and I think (Interruptions) At this stage it might be better to have you look for an appropriate witness but just the topic would be approved. When is the next date for a committee meeting?

KIM LANGILLE: Since we're not meeting when the House is in session it's probably going to be December.

LEONARD PREYRA: So there is some time to figure this out, right?

KIM LANGILLE: Yes, but if I don't know who to contact then we won't have anybody for December.

THE CHAIR: Mr. Porter.

CHUCK PORTER: If we could, I would like to see the Call to Remembrance that Mr. Gaudet is referring to. That would be really great because their season would have just finished up going through that Remembrance time, et cetera. I believe, Wayne, it's in the Spring that they have the actual Call to Remembrance, is it not? Anyway, I'm quite familiar with this, it's done in various parts of the province; it's quite an organization. Maybe we could get them in if they could come for December, I don't know if they'd be available or not. It would certainly be nice to hear from those folks coming into the Fall season as we work our way through.

THE CHAIR: Is there consensus on that? (Interruption) Good. We should have another one for January.

MICHELE RAYMOND: I'd be interested in hearing from the Veterans Emergency Transition Services actually.

THE CHAIR: Okay, sounds good.

LENORE ZANN: What are you doing about the post-traumatic stress thing?

THE CHAIR: That's going to be looked at as a possibility.

WAYNE GAUDET: We're going to send an invitation to Veterans Affairs Canada. (Laughter)

THE CHAIR: Is that good, Kim? You have a couple to work on or do you need more?

KIM LANGILLE: More is good but two is fine.

THE CHAIR: Is there anyone else, are there any other items?

MICHELE RAYMOND: What do all these witnesses in black . . .

KIM LANGILLE: Those are the ones that are on the list, but they haven't been put forward to be called in.

MICHELE RAYMOND: Okay, so they're approved or they're not approved?

KIM LANGILLE: They were approved to be on the list but they haven't been approved to actually make a presentation.

MICHELE RAYMOND: And green means?

KIM LANGILLE: It means that they've been approved but no date has been set. Red means that they've already been approved.

MICHELE RAYMOND: Right, I know that, so the difference between green and black is?

KIM LANGILLE: Green and black means that they've been approved; we just haven't got a date. Both of these were ones that we haven't been able to find dates for because we were waiting for information or invitations had gone out - for example, the Veterans Affairs Minister, an invitation did go out to him . . .

THE CHAIR: It has been there a long time, hasn't it?

KIM LANGILLE: It has been, but he keeps saying he's not available.

LENORE ZANN: And the post-traumatic stress one . . .

KIM LANGILLE: We've been waiting for information. It has been approved as a witness to come forward, but we haven't been able to have a date because we've been waiting for information.

LENORE ZANN: So now can you ask someone to come and if they say yes, can we have them in December or January, whenever they're available?

THE CHAIR: That will give Kim another one to work on. As far as the last one I don't see (Interruptions) Mr. Preyra.

LEONARD PREYRA: I know we're all ready to go and I'm not a member of this committee, but it seems to me that the transition housing issue sounds very much like an urgent issue and I'm wondering if that should be put at the top of the list. If we can actually do something, December would be the time (Interruptions) I'm just saying if we're also attaching priority now, I would say that is a high priority and should be . . .

LENORE ZANN: Yes, that's really important.

THE CHAIR: Anyway, I think we're at the end of this discussion because I have another meeting to go to.

The last item on the agenda is the annual report. We have a little bit of information that Kim would like to share with you before we have a motion to approve it.

KIM LANGILLE: The annual report has been sent out to everyone. In fact, it was sent out twice electronically. The first time it went out and then what happened, a second draft was sent out because we had received a letter in between the time that I had sent out the first copy that needed to be incorporated into the report. That was one change as to why it was sent out again. I had received one comment initially when I sent the document around that "legion" should be capitalized, so I made that change. I think with that, those are the only changes. The document was revised and sent around, as I mentioned. I haven't received any comment since the revised draft has gone out.

One issue has developed with regard to correspondence. Committee reports generally run for a certain period. In this case, it's September around to the end of August, and that is what is reflected in the report. However, we have received two letters in response to motions that were made by the committee after that period, so I was sort of concerned about how one would go about reflecting that. I made a call to Legislative Counsel to speak to them about it and they suggested putting a sentence - I guess it would be - in the report to indicate whatever correspondence it was, from whom, has been received after the reporting period but before printing, just to say that it did, in fact, get received. I don't know if everyone is okay with doing that. If so, I would have to make a slight change to that one page in the document. If people are okay with approving it with that change being made, then we can proceed.

THE CHAIR: Kim and I talked about that and that seemed to be a very logical thing to do. Consensus? We're okay with that? We need a motion to approve.

CHUCK PORTER: So moved.

THE CHAIR: Moved by Mr. Porter. Seconded.

Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Signatures are next. We'll ask for a motion to adjourn.

CHUCK PORTER: So moved.

THE CHAIR: We are adjourned. I'll just ask you to sign this before you leave.

[The committee adjourned at 11:18 a.m.]