



Government
of Canada
RCMP Reform
Implementation
Council

Gouvernement
du Canada
Conseil de mise
en œuvre de la
réforme à la GRC

From Reform to Continuous Improvement: The Future of the RCMP

The Final Report of the
RCMP Reform Implementation Council

December 2010

Canada 

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December, 2010

The Honourable Vic Toews
Minister of Public Safety

Dear Minister Toews:

The RCMP Reform Implementation Council is pleased to submit its fifth and final report under a mandate which ends on December 19, 2010.

The creation of an implementation council to “provide leadership and guidance to the renewal process” was an innovation in public sector management recommended by the *Task Force on Governance and Cultural Change in the RCMP*. Since our appointment in 2008, we have sought to fulfill our mandate by helping to guide the ongoing process of RCMP reform with a keen eye to the changes in culture and management required to ensure a strong future for the Force.

Working with the people who make up the senior levels of the RCMP has been a privilege for the Council. We respect the talent and dedication they bring to their responsibilities and hope our different points of view have helped them to understand better what needs to be done to ensure the successful transformation of the institution that is in their hands.

We also want to pay tribute to the men and women serving in the ranks of the RCMP, whose courage, skill and dedication uphold the best traditions of the Force. We have been privileged to see in action some of those who serve on the front lines and to appreciate what a difficult and often dangerous job they do for the communities they serve. We have also come to understand the crucial roles played by employees in administrative and technical positions, without whose support the RCMP could not function. One important outcome of reform should be to enable all employees to make an enhanced contribution to the safety and security of Canadians.

Our reports to you and your predecessors, and ultimately to all Canadians, have been intended to help the Government shape its views on key RCMP issues and also to reinforce public support for the Force in its continuing transformation initiatives.

Our key message in this, our final report, is that the health and effectiveness of the RCMP cannot be taken for granted. Renewal is a top priority for the leadership of the Force, but it also requires continuing support from the Government and the public.

It has been our view from the outset that the continuing development of the RCMP in all its roles requires reform of the governance and management of the Force. To this end, we consider that the creation of a formal RCMP board of management, together with appropriate changes to status of the Force as an employer, is needed to ensure the success of the transformation begun by the Government three years ago.

We very much appreciate the opportunity we have been given to contribute to the transformation of Canada’s national police service. We have every confidence that the RCMP will continue to be a great asset for Canadians in the decades ahead.

Yours sincerely,

David McAusland

Jocelyne Côté-O’Hara

Jean-Claude Bouchard

Beverley A. Busson

Introduction

The Changing RCMP

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police has long been recognized as one of Canada's great national institutions. In its earliest days, the Force played a key role in settling the West and developing the North. Over the decades, the RCMP grew in size and scope until it was responsible for policing much of Canada and for serving in a wide range of national roles, becoming in the process one of the most respected police organizations in the world.

Today the RCMP provides police services on behalf of the three territories and eight of the provinces, as well as hundreds of cities, municipalities and Aboriginal communities across Canada. It collaborates closely with other Canadian police forces, including municipal services and the Ontario and Quebec provincial police. It serves national law enforcement needs, including those of the federal government, in areas as diverse as organized crime, drug trafficking, counter-terrorism and commercial crime. The Force supplies essential support services such as forensic identification and the criminal records database to other Canadian police forces. It provides protection for the Governor General, the Prime Minister, foreign dignitaries and diplomats. It represents Canada on ceremonial occasions at home and abroad, helps to train police forces in Canada and around the world, and collaborates with police in other countries and with international agencies. The RCMP also works closely with a wide range of federal agencies from the Canada Border Services Agency to Transport Canada to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

Canadians understand the importance of the RCMP in both its local and its national roles. They want the Force to live up to its well-earned reputation in meeting their needs for community safety and national policing. They know, of course, that in carrying out its complex responsibilities and interacting daily with tens of thousands of Canadians, the RCMP will inevitably get some things wrong – sometimes badly so – even as it gets most things right. When it does make mistakes, they expect the Force to be accountable and to respond openly and effectively to scrutiny. If, as we fully expect, the RCMP acts decisively to improve its performance in the future, Canadians will know that it has learned from its errors as well as from its successes.

Over the years, the roles played by the RCMP have constantly changed and expanded. Yet the RCMP has remained at heart an organization with a strong culture of command and control. Despite important progress in areas such as community policing, with its enhanced accountability to the public, the institutional culture, governance mechanisms and management approach of the Force have evolved remarkably slowly.

To meet new challenges and ever-higher expectations, it is clear that the RCMP must be committed to fundamental change and must have the means to bring about that change. Everyone now understands that – the federal government; the provinces, territories and municipalities for which the RCMP delivers police services; the general public and, perhaps most importantly, the leaders of the Force itself. They also need to understand that change must become a permanent condition of the RCMP.

This fifth and final report of the RCMP Reform Implementation Council is focused on setting the direction for the future of the Force. It explains why reform is aimed at transforming not only how the Force works but the very culture and ethos of the organization. The report recalls what has already been accomplished in the few years since the current RCMP reform process began, and it identifies the steps and the structures needed to ensure that the idea of continuing reform is embedded at every level of the RCMP.

The Reform Implementation Council

The RCMP Reform Implementation Council was appointed by the Government in March 2008 to “help ensure that the RCMP implements the reforms necessary to modernize the organization and its operations, and ensure it will be well placed to meet the challenges of the future.” The Council’s job was to oversee reform and report to the Minister of Public Safety on its progress, as well as to advise the Minister and the Commissioner of the RCMP on related matters.¹

While our backgrounds are diverse, all the members of the Council share a deep respect for the RCMP and a strong desire to see the institution revitalize itself. Throughout our nearly three years in this role, we have enjoyed a thoroughly open and cooperative relationship with the senior leadership of the RCMP, even if we did not see eye-to-eye on every issue. And we have come to admire enormously the work that is done by the employees of the Force, whether or not they wear a uniform. We have sought to create conditions in which the more than 31,000 men and women of the RCMP have the leadership and support they need to serve Canadians even better in the future.

With the term of the Council ending on December 19, 2010, it is clear that the time has come for the RCMP to move forward under the guidance of a more permanent external body that can advise and challenge senior management. It is also clear that the relationship of the RCMP to the Government needs to be redefined. Advocating for a new governance and management framework for the RCMP has been a priority of the Council throughout our term, and it has now become even more so.

The first requirement is for the Government to appoint a board of management to provide the RCMP with a necessary external perspective on how it can best achieve its mission, to serve as a check on decision-making at the highest levels, and generally to help the Force pursue a goal of excellence in management that parallels its commitment to excellence in policing. *Indeed, the difficulties encountered by the senior leadership of the RCMP in recent months make us all the more convinced of the need for such a mechanism – an independent body that works in good faith to push, prod and challenge the Force constructively towards excellence in leadership and management in a spirit of continuous improvement.*

The second requirement is that the Government act to give the RCMP a status more appropriate to its mandate and responsibilities. The Force needs greater autonomy and flexibility, especially in the area of labour relations and human resources management.

We recognize that implementing the necessary changes may take more than just a few months. We would be very concerned, however, if there were to be a material gap between the departure of the Council and the introduction of a board of management. We address this matter directly later in this report.

Our other major goal as a Council has been to do everything we could to help make continuous improvement a permanent feature of the RCMP ethos. As we explain in the next section, our understanding of the reforms needed by the RCMP evolved rapidly as we came to know the Force and understand its challenges.

In our work we became ever more convinced that real and durable reform must be drawn from within the organization and that reform, improvement and refinement in both management and policing must never be seen as a finished task. They are obligations that will be with the Force forever.

¹ See Annex A for the mandate and membership of the Council.

The Meaning of Reform

The Changing Understanding of Reform

The concept of RCMP reform has evolved considerably over the past three years. When the Reform Implementation Council was first appointed, the focus was on the report of the 2007 *Task Force on Governance and Cultural Change in the RCMP*, chaired by Mr. David Brown. The Task Force had made 49 specific recommendations in areas ranging from the relationship between the RCMP and the Government to the roles and responsibilities of various parts of the Force. Over half of the Task Force's recommendations dealt with human resources and workplace issues of one kind or another.

In some of the initial responses to the Task Force report there was an expectation that while the necessary changes might be difficult they could be made in a finite time – whether months or years – and that reform could then be considered essentially complete. This unrealistic view was not shared by the Council or by senior management of the RCMP.

The early efforts of the RCMP Change Management Team were largely driven by an urgent need to respond to the specific recommendations of the Task Force, but as the Council worked with the Team to explore the issues, a more fundamental, longer term concept of reform evolved. This gave rise to the *RCMP Vision for Change*, which defined the kind of organization the RCMP is determined to become: “an adaptive, accountable, trusted organization of fully engaged employees demonstrating outstanding leadership and providing world-class police services.” The *Vision* remains central to current thinking about reform by the Council and the RCMP.

A key to realizing the *Vision* is the concept of continuous improvement. This approach, developed initially in the private sector but increasingly adopted by public service organizations including police forces, commits the organization to striving continually to become better at serving its clients and at managing its employees and other resources. In other words, the organization becomes self-adjusting, monitoring its own performance and deliberately working to do better in all respects. *Such a continually adapting organization should no longer be subject to periodic third party demands for reform – reform is its normal and permanent state.*

A culture of continuous improvement can only take hold if it is actively promoted at every level of the organization by self-confident, open-minded leaders who are prepared to listen to those they lead as well as to those they serve. Such leaders must not only be prepared to deal with risk in their own decision-making, they must encourage and reward initiative among those who report to them. The Force and its leaders must be open to new ideas, regardless of the source. Embracing these leadership characteristics must become a priority for the Force.

By the time the Council delivered its first report in fall 2008, we had become convinced that the idea of continuous improvement has to be firmly embedded in the thinking and actions of employees at every level and an integral part of the culture and ethos of the RCMP. If they are to embrace and contribute to change, employees must see that continuous improvement can make a practical difference in how the RCMP carries out its responsibilities on the front line, how the Force uses its human and other resources, and how its employees will be enabled to serve Canadians better. For this, the leaders, managers and supervisors must themselves be informed and engaged.

We also knew that sustainable reform should come, wherever possible, from inside the organization. Perhaps one could describe this as pulling change from within the organization rather than pushing it in from the outside. Accordingly, our aim has been to help the RCMP improve by drawing upon its own best instincts and knowledge, reinforced by the advice and experience of others.

Reform Themes

As a Council, we were aware that our mandate was not about how the RCMP does its job of operational policing. Rather, we were appointed to help the RCMP improve its management of human and financial resources, its development of future leaders, its communication both internal and external, and its accountability to government and the public. These are the things that can build a stronger foundation for better policing by enabling first class leaders and managers to deliver on the RCMP mission and meet the expectations of Canadians.

We observed that the RCMP had, since the beginning, displayed a culture of policing excellence admired around the world. We also saw, however, that the Force had been less consistently successful in developing a corresponding capacity for modern management.

Our extended discussions with the Commissioner and the members of the Senior Executive Committee were based on a shared view that reform had to be embedded in a new RCMP culture that combined the best of the traditional Mountie ethos with the RCMP's new vision of continuous improvement for management excellence. Several essential themes emerged:

- First, we agreed that the greatest strength of the Force is its people – the men and women, uniformed and civilian, who make it all possible. Thus as a first priority reform had to address human resources and workplace issues. Great progress has been made in this area.
- Second, there was general acceptance that comprehensive reform would require a new kind of leadership combining commitment to ongoing change, a strong sense of personal and institutional ethics, and the skills and competencies to manage a complex modern organization. While the work is advancing very well, the challenges remain substantial and it is essential that this effort continue to be given high priority.
- Third, the members of the Council began as firm believers in the critical importance of modern communications for any organization. We became even more strongly convinced during our tenure that the RCMP must reach out more openly and effectively to its own employees and to the Canadian public. Much more remains to be done in this area.
- Finally and most importantly, the Council was convinced that the RCMP requires a new framework of governance and management, including a continuing source of outside advice and challenge for senior management, as well as a redefinition of the status of the organization. We have consistently promoted the concept of a civilian board of management for the RCMP and we have become convinced that greater management independence for the Force is needed, especially with respect to its role as employer. These measures will be the foundation on which all other elements of progress and reform are built.

In the next section we look at how these themes have been pursued in RCMP reform efforts to date and where we believe they must go in the future if the momentum of reform is to be maintained.

The Progress of Reform

The changes already made to RCMP systems and processes are not always appreciated. In fact, a great deal of work has been done to overhaul many aspects of RCMP management and administration. In our fourth report, we provided a detailed update on the various projects undertaken in response to the recommendations of the 2007 Task Force. In addition, the RCMP itself has produced a comprehensive overview of reform to date. *Progress: Transformation of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police*,² has been widely circulated within the RCMP and among governments, public agencies and other interested parties. The Force is to be congratulated for producing this excellent and timely report.

In this section we briefly outline progress already made or under way and offer our views on what needs to be done to maintain the momentum of reform. First, however, we must comment briefly on two important developments that were not part of our reform mandate but that are of great significance to the future of the RCMP.

Civilian Oversight

On June 14, 2010, the Government introduced Bill C-38 to create a new independent civilian review and complaints body for the RCMP to replace the existing Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP. The new Commission will have greater access to RCMP information and enhanced investigative powers. It will be able to conduct policy reviews, undertake joint investigations and share information with other review bodies, and provide reports to provinces and territories that contract policing services from the RCMP.

The Government's move builds on steps taken by the RCMP, which acted earlier in the year to enhance the transparency and accountability of investigations into serious incidents involving RCMP members. Under a new policy, all such cases will be referred to provincial or territorial special agencies, where these exist, or to external police agencies, where they do not. We understand that such arrangements are already in place in at least two jurisdictions and that dialogue is continuing with other provincial authorities. Only as a last resort will the RCMP undertake such an investigation itself.

The Council recognizes that the RCMP has been a strong advocate of enhanced civilian oversight and welcomes these developments as part of the larger reform of the RCMP. While civilian oversight of RCMP operational performance is something quite distinct from management issues, we believe that accountability in all its forms is at the core of reform.

Contract Policing

The RCMP is currently engaged in renegotiating the contracts with the provinces, territories and communities for which it provides policing services. The Council appreciates the critical importance of contract policing as part of the RCMP mandate. We have previously noted the progress made in establishing new principles and mechanisms of consultation and cooperation that treat the contract authorities as partners in policing decisions and we have observed a real willingness to recognize the priorities of each jurisdiction and provide for their input into RCMP planning and management, including the process of RCMP reform.

² Available on line at: <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/pubs/pro-trans/index-eng.htm>

People

Human Resource Issues

As noted earlier, about half of the 49 recommendations made by the Task Force in 2007 concerned human resources and related issues. Consequently much of the initial reform effort went into that area, and some very positive results were achieved. One of the most noteworthy early successes was an overhaul of the recruiting system which, combined with the introduction of cadet pay, led to the rapid elimination of the shortfall in new entrants that had plagued the RCMP for several years. Since 2007, over 29,000 people have applied to join the RCMP. Larger numbers of applications and a better selection system have given the Force the scope to choose candidates with the skills and qualities required to build a strong new generation of uniformed officers (regular members). Progress has also been made in attracting new civilian members and public servants. By April 1, 2010, the RCMP workforce had reached 31,337, its highest level ever.

These major accomplishments were led by Deputy Commissioner Peter Martin, who tragically died only a few weeks after his retirement from the Force in April 2010. They have enabled the RCMP to strengthen its efforts to attract the best possible recruits while reflecting the makeup of the communities it serves by hiring more women, Aboriginal Canadians, and visible minorities.

Training, both at Depot in Regina and subsequently through field coaching across Canada, has been strengthened, and a new emphasis is being placed on mentorship at all stages of a career. Individual learning plans have been integrated into a new and streamlined performance assessment process. The promotion system has been significantly improved and linked more strongly to the identification of leadership potential. Disciplinary processes are being overhauled, as is the grievance system.

A whole range of issues relating to pay and benefits, working and living conditions, wellness and disability have been dealt with or are well on the way to resolution. For example, compensation is now provided for members who must be available for work while off duty, while innovative ways of providing relief to members in small or isolated communities have been introduced. Increased service pay is now available for long-serving regular members and certain specialized civilian members; this allowance is helping the RCMP retain experienced members and attract highly qualified people.

Finally, in a move which the Council considers particularly important, the RCMP now produces a comprehensive annual Human Resources Strategy linked to operational and business planning.

The Council recognizes the major accomplishments of the RCMP in addressing the needs of its people. While there is always more to be done and room for further improvement, important progress has been made in overcoming many of the problems that most affected employees and that limited the Force's ability to best use its human resources to serve Canadians. We see that the approach of the Force to human resources development has been methodical and forward-looking – in a word, strategic. This is good.

Labour Relations

The Council is very much aware that from here on RCMP reform will be taking place in a new labour relations context. The exact nature of the new regime remains to be determined, in part by the courts and Parliament, but also by RCMP members themselves.

The requirement for change results from a ruling by the Ontario Superior Court in April 2009 that rejected the current RCMP labour relations system as denying freedom of association to rank and file officers. In response, the Government of Canada tabled the *Royal Canadian Mounted Police Modernization Act (Bill C-43)* in the House of Commons on June 17, 2010. The proposed Act would create a new labour relations regime for the RCMP, including a new engagement process which will permit members to address workplace issues through a system of consultative committees. It would give them a choice either to continue working in this consultative environment or to become unionized and represented by a certified bargaining agent.

The Bill, which includes a number of amendments to the *RCMP Act*, would improve human resource management processes related to grievance, discipline and the terms and conditions of employment. It would also support effective management by giving to the Commissioner authorities similar to those of a deputy head in the federal Public Service or the head of any large police service.

While the Council is not directly involved in labour relations issues, it has been kept informed of developments and recognizes the importance of the outcomes for the RCMP. In particular, the pending transition in the labour-management relationship makes all the more urgent the need for fundamental changes to the RCMP's status as an employer. It also adds to the arguments for the early creation of an RCMP board of management. These are changes which in our view are essential elements of a modern governance model and management regime for Canada's national police service.

Leadership

Developing Future Leaders

If recruiting, training and retaining good people is one absolute requirement in building a stronger RCMP, providing the right kind of leadership at every level is the other. Nothing is more important for the future of the RCMP than the continuing development of new generations of leaders at all levels of the Force with the personal strengths, attitudes and management skills to run this complex national organization. These leaders must display integrity, self-confidence and openness to change. They must respect the traditions of the RCMP while always seeking ways to serve Canadians better.

We said a year ago that the RCMP was on the right track in developing new approaches to selecting and developing future leaders. What we see today confirms our view and suggests that steady progress is being made. Equally important, the Force is rethinking what leadership means. We applaud the new emphasis on selection, promotion and development of men and women with not only leadership potential but also the right supervisory and management skills. We were pleased to hear senior managers stressing the need to develop the leadership capabilities of NCOs and other first level supervisors.

The Council also endorses the new 360-degree approach to performance evaluation that will include assessments from subordinates, superiors, colleagues and clients. We welcome the new focus on ethics and integrity for all members of the RCMP, but especially for supervisors, managers and senior executives, that is represented by the RCMP's recent creation of the Office of Professional Integrity.

We believe that investment in leadership is not only amply justified but vital to the future of the organization. The proof will come over the next few years as the new leaders emerge to demonstrate their capabilities.

We note that the RCMP has become more open to drawing senior management from outside its own ranks. This is a positive trend. We would add that while the Force can benefit from skilled managers from the federal Public Service, it must also look to other levels of government, to other police services and to the private sector for fresh skills and points of view. Moreover, the flow should be in both directions; there are major benefits to be had from the movement of experienced RCMP managers to other police services, governments and the private sector, either for developmental assignments or into new careers.

We are pleased the Force has recognized that excellent professionals, whether police officers or civilian specialists, do not automatically make successful managers. Leaders should be chosen for their future management potential and not only for their past accomplishments. Selection and development of supervisors, managers and executives must focus on meeting the needs of the organization, rather than on rewarding performance in other areas, vital as those areas may be. Recognition of excellence in policing is essential but should often be provided in other ways.

Reinforcing this new approach is the increased attention being paid to leadership succession, a vitally important matter because the demographics of the Force will result in a continuing stream of retirements for years to come and because choosing the right qualities in the next generation of leaders is vital to continuing the process of reform.

The Council applauds the progress made by the RCMP in developing a new concept of leadership and in strengthening and refocusing the selection and development of future leaders for every level of the Force. Reform is above all about leadership, and these efforts are among the most important steps the RCMP can take to ensure its transformation into a continuously improving organization. The RCMP must maintain and enhance the momentum that has been developed in this area.

Engaging Employees

One of the most important responsibilities of managers and supervisors is to ensure that all employees understand and support the organization's goals and strategies for change. In the RCMP this means that continuous improvement must not only be inspired and led from the top down, it must also permeate every level of the organization. This can only happen if all employees are engaged in building the future of the Force. Engagement must become a fundamental element of RCMP culture.

As part of the reform process, senior leaders of the RCMP have participated in town hall meetings for employees throughout the country. Websites at both the national and regional levels have highlighted reform activities. These initiatives have given employees the opportunity to participate in transforming the organization. Despite these efforts, we believe that more needs to be done to explain where the reform process is heading and what has been achieved and to embed the idea of continuous improvement in the RCMP culture.

We appreciate that engagement takes time and effort. We understand that many of the initiatives with the greatest impact are still under development or in an early stage of implementation. But we believe more can be done by RCMP leaders to make reform meaningful throughout the Force.

Our message is clear – the RCMP must engage all its employees, both uniformed and civilian, in the process of renewal and the delivery of world-class policing services to Canadians. Special attention must be paid to involving front-line supervisors – the NCOs and their civilian counterparts – as they are the ones whose advice, attitudes and example count the most with the majority of employees.

Communication

The Principle of Openness

The Council believes that communication is central to the functioning of any modern organization, including the RCMP; it should not be considered an add-on but rather an important vehicle to support the mission and goals of the organization. Effective communication begins with a willingness on the part of management to share information. Members of the RCMP's senior executive team have indicated that they recognize the need for greater openness and transparency in communicating with employees and with the public.

The Council fully recognizes that the requirements of police investigations and privacy laws may impose limits on openness. Our point, however, is that the Force should operate on the principle of sharing as much information as possible, rather than only the minimum required.

We also understand, of course, that many of the matters about which the RCMP must communicate with the public involve difficult incidents and will never be received positively by everyone. But in our view effective communication always makes a difference.

Our bottom line is that the RCMP must be as open and transparent as possible in dealing with its own employees and with the public. This is another touchstone for testing the success of reform and for recognizing an organization that is striving always to be better. The Force must aim higher in this area.

The RCMP Communications Function

Early in its mandate the Council urged the RCMP to recognize the communications function as a critical and integral component of its operations, and we know our message resonated with senior management. We soon saw the hiring of an Executive Director of Public Affairs and the development of programs and activities for both internal and external audiences. Despite limited resources, there was progress in equipping the Force to communicate its strengths and deal with problems. And we believe that hard lessons were learned about correcting the errors that may occur if communications are not well managed.

Specific initiatives to enhance the image and reputation of the RCMP with the Canadian public have included the production and broadcast of the television series *Courage in Red*. Reports produced at NHQ and in the regions, including the one on reform cited earlier, have done a good job of explaining the RCMP transformation and the Force's various policing activities. We are also pleased to see that, as recommended some time ago, suitably senior officers are now serving as spokespersons where needed on important cases and other law enforcement issues.

Yet we remain concerned that the organization still lacks an urgent and strategic approach to communications, often appearing to be reacting to events, rather than anticipating them. Indeed, communications activities sometimes seem to be perceived by management as marginal or optional.

What must be developed and implemented is a comprehensive communications strategy that recognizes the value of open and timely exchanges within the RCMP, with external stakeholders, and especially with the media. While a plan has been presented to the Council, we have not witnessed either its implementation or the broad-based support from the Senior Executive Committee (SEC) that is required to secure specific and measurable results.

For example, the resources have not been found to do enough training and development of the RCMP members who act as the spokespeople for the Force every day in Headquarters and across Canada. Similarly, the critical question of who makes which decisions on specific communications issues – NHQ, Division or Detachment – remains to be adequately addressed.

It is our view that a well conceived and implemented RCMP communications strategy would help build understanding and support for the reform agenda. It would provide the justification necessary for the SEC to assign appropriate resources to communications operations and ensure that communications activities are better integrated with operations at all levels.

We believe that an effective strategy would increase the impact of communications tools, particularly the new ones such as social networking that offer less costly and more effective ways to communicate. The strategy would certainly include outreach efforts that could enhance the relationship with external stakeholders and develop constructive networks of two-way exchange with the media. The perception of the Force could be transformed to one of openness and transparency, within the limits imposed by legal and operational constraints.

The Council believes that the RCMP “brand” and Canadian pride in the Force as a national icon would be strengthened if basic challenges facing the communications function in the RCMP were tackled more aggressively. Much more remains to be done in the timely and effective delivery of communications services, as well as in the development and implementation of an overall strategy of internal and external communications. There is no formula for this other than prioritization, resources and hard work.

Governance and Management

The 2007 Task Force identified three critical changes as fundamental to good governance and accountability: appointment of an external management board, separate entity status for the RCMP, and creation of an independent commission for review and complaints. To date, the Government has initiated the necessary legislative action only on the last of these proposals.

A New Framework for Governance and Management

The Council is convinced that ongoing reform of the RCMP requires a new approach to governance and management of the Force, one that opens the way to outside advice and provides an external challenge to executive decision-making. Moreover, in recognizing the RCMP as an organization unlike regular Government departments and agencies, the new approach should also redefine the status of the RCMP and its role as an employer.

From the beginning, the Council has seen the introduction of a management board – a formal mechanism of external advice, oversight and guidance – as an essential aspect of successful and sustainable RCMP reform. We believe that such an improved and updated governance model will become the foundation upon which all successful reforms and improvements rest.

We have also concluded that it is time to reconsider the relationship of the RCMP to its employees and to the Government. To us, the essence of separate entity status as proposed by the Task Force is the idea of the RCMP as an employer distinct from the Public Service of Canada. We believe the time is right for the Government to move the RCMP towards full separate employer status.

Board of Management

As we have explained in previous reports, a board of management for the RCMP would be made up of eminent Canadians chosen for their independence, insight and expertise. The Council sees such a board as bringing a range of benefits to the RCMP.

- A board would challenge senior management to make better substantive decisions, offer them a wide range of insights into options and implications, and provide a sounding board for exploring ideas about future directions. The risks of a “no good if not invented here” philosophy of management would be substantially diminished.
- By exposing senior management to the thinking of experienced people from the public and private sectors, a board would contribute to developing excellence and innovation in management techniques and philosophy in the RCMP. It could be of significant help in the important area of values and ethics.
- A board of management could add to the credibility of RCMP management inside government, helping it to gain the enhanced authority and flexibility required by a modern police force, especially one facing so many competing demands. It would be much closer to the specific management issues of the Force than Treasury Board can ever be.
- Finally, a board could serve as the champion of RCMP reform and continuous improvement, taking over this responsibility from the Reform Implementation Council.

A formally constituted board with an appropriate mandate defined in legislation would contribute to excellence in modern management by bringing the expectations and knowledge of the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other public sector organizations to bear on the RCMP. In difficult management situations such as the RCMP experienced last summer, a board would be a major asset in resolving issues or heading them off before they boil over.

As the authors of the study *Building Better Boards* said: “We are absolutely convinced that active and appropriately engaged boards, drawing from their members’ collective experience, insights and intellect, can partner with senior management in an environment of constructive contention to produce better decisions than management would have made on its own.”³ We agree entirely.

These benefits are possible only if the board is made up of people carefully chosen for their knowledge and willingness to devote themselves to the interests of the RCMP and of the Canadian public that it serves. Board members must be willing to work hard to understand and contribute to the better functioning of the institution. They must not act as the representatives of other governments or interest groups but instead bring their individual judgement and knowledge to serve the best interests of the RCMP. Members must, of course, be selected with due regard to regional, linguistic, gender and other kinds of balance, but they must first and foremost have the knowledge, experience, ability, energy, and integrity to become effective participants in the work of the board. For the right kind of people, this will be an opportunity to contribute to a vital national institution as well as a rewarding challenge.

The creation in 2009 of the RCMP Departmental Audit Committee reflected the Government’s objectives of strengthening public sector accountability, risk management, resource stewardship and governance. The Council has met with the Committee members to share ideas about governance and accountability in the RCMP. We see the committee as playing a distinct and essential role in the effort to strengthen the RCMP management function, one that fits well with our vision of excellence in governance and with the role of a board of management as part of a new overall management framework.

We have assumed that the creation of the Reform Implementation Council in the first place – and the two mandate renewals we have received since – shows that the Government recognizes the value of bringing an external perspective to bear on RCMP reform. We believe that this same approach would be a wise course for the longer term management of the organization.

The Council considers that a formally established board of management for the RCMP, as recommended by the Task Force in 2007, is an essential and urgent requirement of ongoing RCMP reform.

Separate Employer Status

In previous reports, the Council discussed the recommendation of the Task Force to “establish the RCMP as a separate entity from government with separate employer status.” We concluded that the RCMP does need a greater degree of autonomy to manage its affairs. We observed that the rules imposed by Treasury Board on the RCMP are often not appropriate to the needs of an operational police force.

3 *Building Better Boards; a blueprint for effective governance*, David A. Nadler, Beverly A. Behan and Mark B. Nadler, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 2006.

We believe the RCMP now needs to move to true separate employer status. This will enable the Force to develop its own human resources regime adapted to the special needs of policing. It will also help to overcome anomalies in the categories of civilian and public service employees, making the system simpler and more coherent.

We recognize that becoming a separate employer would require a significant investment of effort and resources on the part of the Force in developing new management systems, but we see this as something positive, an opportunity for the RCMP to take on more fully the management of its own financial and human resources. We believe the successes of the past three years in the human resources area demonstrate that the Force is capable of responding admirably to such challenges.

The Council believes that the Government should move without delay to initiate legislative action to give the RCMP new status as a separate entity and separate employer.

The Need for Urgent Action

These vital changes will require legislative action. In addition, becoming a separate employer will require the RCMP to take on responsibility for key human resources functions now managed by the Treasury Board, a process that will take time and require the Force to develop new capabilities and systems. But this is all the more reason to get started soon.

More specifically, there are three key reasons for creating a board of management without delay and for implementing separate employer status as soon as possible after that:

- The first is to maintain the momentum of change that has been achieved through three years of reform and that could easily slip away.
- The second is to ensure that the RCMP is in the best possible position to address constructively the new labour-management regime that will soon be introduced.
- Finally, a new and stronger governance and management framework is needed to enable the RCMP to take on more effectively the enormous and often unpredictable challenges of its complex mandate.

The Council strongly believes, therefore, that now is the right time for the Government to initiate legislative action to create a new framework of governance and management for the RCMP, including status as a separate employer. Such significant changes can be both a catalyst and an enabler of transformational change.

Of particular concern to us is the likelihood of a lengthy period, probably well over a year, between the end of the Council's mandate and the earliest date at which an effectively functioning RCMP board of management could be in place. We ask that the Government give serious consideration to appointing an interim body that could bridge the gap and ensure that the RCMP is not without external advice for such a length of time.

Looking Ahead

A Challenging Time

The last few years have been trying ones for the RCMP. Not only was the Force required to deal with the original administrative problems and other events that had led to the report of the *Task Force on Governance and Cultural Change in the RCMP* and to the appointment for the first time of a civilian as Commissioner, but it was then hit with a further series of challenges. The events at Vancouver Airport involving the tragic death of Robert Dziekanski received close public attention for many months; the Major Report on the Air India bombing brought back problems of previous years to the public's attention; and several other incidents and critical reports forced the RCMP to re-examine some of its basic operational policies and how they were being implemented.

On a more positive note, the 2010 Olympics and the G8/G20 summits allowed the Force to demonstrate its great strengths in delivering expert police and security services in coordination with other police services, security agencies and provincial and municipal governments. But they too placed an enormous strain on the RCMP.

Moreover, these major events came during renegotiation of contract policing agreements with provinces and other jurisdictions, a complex process, still under way, that affects over 60% of the RCMP's resources. And, as noted earlier, the RCMP has been required in the past year to rethink its whole approach to labour relations as a result of a decision of the Ontario Superior Court which struck down the existing regime.

Finally, the management stresses and strains of the past several months, and the related media coverage, have been a further complicating factor.

While each of these events has been in its own way a challenging experience for the RCMP, they have all provided opportunities to deal with fundamental issues affecting the future of the Force. We believe the lessons learned from the past several years will ultimately contribute to building a new and better RCMP.

Reform

Through this difficult period, the RCMP has been engaged in the most far-reaching reform in its history. In this process of strengthening leadership, accountability and management, it has had the support, advice and constructive criticism of the Reform Implementation Council.

As members of the Council we took on our task because we believe the RCMP matters to all Canadians. Like many others, we were disappointed that the Force had encountered difficulties, including some of its own making. We saw that it had lost some of the confidence and respect it had so long enjoyed in this country. We have been very proud to play a part in efforts to restore that confidence and respect, and we remain optimistic that the ambitions set out in this report can be realized.

As a Council, we end our final term convinced that in many ways the RCMP is significantly better equipped to face the future than it was just three years ago and that the need for change has been accepted at the highest levels of management. Obvious changes have been made on many fronts. Much of what still needs to be done has been clearly defined by senior management and described in our reports. Through all this, the immense capability of the RCMP as a police organization has been evident, as have the strengths of its people, both uniformed and civilian. They are a huge asset to Canada.

If we have reservations, they in no way reflect on the specific accomplishments of reform to date or those that are clearly on the way. These changes will help the RCMP do its many jobs better. They will help it become more accountable – not only to government but to the communities it serves and to Canadians generally. And they will help it build a stronger management foundation for its diverse policing responsibilities. In this sense, we can report that most of the specific problems identified three years ago by the Task Force are being effectively addressed.

Despite these successes, there is always a concern about whether enough has yet been done to make reform a permanent condition of the RCMP. The risk as we see it is that the Force, and those responsible for leading and managing it, might finish the current round of changes and see reform as complete. If that happens, it will only be a matter of time before new challenges emerge that cannot be dealt with effectively and the Force will again face crisis-driven change.

This scenario is quite likely to occur unless the culture of continuous improvement, strong and ethical leadership, and more open communication with employees and the public that has been gradually emerging over the past three years takes hold and becomes an ongoing and core feature of the RCMP.

Equally important, to build on the gains of reform requires the creation of a permanent mechanism to provide external advice and challenge to senior management and a new definition of the RCMP's relationship to the Government and its employees. These steps are needed to continue the transformation of the RCMP into what the *Vision for Change* calls "an adaptive, accountable, trusted organization of fully engaged employees demonstrating outstanding leadership and providing world-class police services."

Finally, we should say that although the Council has placed great emphasis throughout this report on the need for continuous improvement, this does not mean that change should always be gradual. As we have explained, the advent of a new labour relations regime for the RCMP in coming months makes this a time when definitive action is essential. The Government now has a unique opportunity to consolidate the gains of reform and equip the Force for the future by creating a new governance and management framework for the RCMP. At the same time, it needs to recognize that without additional resources the RCMP cannot both successfully transform itself for the future and meet increasing demands for service that are coming from all directions.

Conclusions

As we review the accomplishments of the past three years and look ahead at what needs to be done next, the Reform Implementation Council concludes that four areas of continuing change are essential to sustaining the momentum of RCMP reform:

- 1. The RCMP has come a long way in the area of human resources and workplace policies. Now it must build on its achievements by continuing its program of reform and renewal, including more effective employee engagement. For its part, the Government should provide appropriate levels of support for these crucial elements of RCMP transformation.*
- 2. The RCMP has made an excellent start on its overhaul of leadership development at all levels. It must continue to invest in affirming its new model of leadership and in improving the selection, training and development of future leaders, both uniformed and civilian.*
- 3. The RCMP has not moved aggressively enough to meet the internal and external communications needs of the Force. It must implement a more strategic approach to communications activities while developing an increasingly open and transparent approach to relations with employees, partners and the public.*
- 4. The governance and management framework of the RCMP was a top priority in the recommendations of the Task Force Report, yet it remains essentially as it was before reform began. The Government should move ahead expeditiously with the creation of a formally constituted RCMP board of management and the initiation of separate employer status for the Force.*

Annex A: The Reform Implementation Council

The Council was established by the government in March 2008 in response to a recommendation of the Task Force on Governance and Cultural Change in the RCMP.⁴ The Council was given the following mandate:

- to provide advice to the Minister of Public Safety on implementation of reforms approved by the Government;
- to provide advice and assistance to the Commissioner of the RCMP respecting the RCMP implementation plan;
- to monitor progress of reforms approved by Government and undertaken by the RCMP; and
- to submit regular progress reports to the Minister of Public Safety.

The Council's mandate was renewed for an additional 12 months in March 2009 and for a final nine months in March 2010. Its term ends on December 19, 2010.

The Council is chaired by David McAusland, a corporate director, consultant and lawyer from Montreal. The other current members are:

- Jean-Claude Bouchard, a former deputy minister and career public servant.
- Beverley A. Busson, former Commissioner of the RCMP.
- Jocelyne Côté-O'Hara, a corporate director and former government executive.

During the first two terms of the Council, Kevin McAlpine, a professor and former Chief of the Durham Regional Police Service also served as a member.

⁴ "...in our view, it is necessary for the RCMP and the Government of Canada to take decisive steps and to report on them publicly. A fundamental underpinning of our recommendations, therefore, is the immediate creation of an Implementation Council which will provide leadership and guidance to the renewal process and which will keep the public apprised of its progress." *Rebuilding the Trust: Report of the Task Force on Governance and Cultural Change in the RCMP*, December 2007.