



FRIEDA MARTSELOS
MLA, THEBACHA

Oral Question 974-19(2): Policing

This letter is in follow-up to the Oral Question you raised on March 3, 2022 regarding the increasing costs associated with policing in the territory, and subsequent benefit to residents. I committed to provide you further information on this.

I share the Member's concerns about the trend of increasing costs of policing that the NWT and the rest of the country has been experiencing in recent years. The Department has stressed the importance of innovation and continuous improvement in the Territorial Police Service by setting a formal priority for the RCMP to take innovative approaches to operational and fiscal matters. Currently RCMP 'G' Division operations are heavily weighted in human capital, with about 60 percent of the costs going towards the employment of members to provide policing services. Operational and transportation costs related to policing are much higher in northern and remote communities and are significantly affected by inflation. The cost related to the RCMP Territorial Police Service Agreement (TPSA) is \$49,400,000 and represents 70 percent of the costs of the territorial police services we receive under the TPSA. Over the last ten years, the TPSA budget has grown by an average of \$1.4 million per year. Now, as we work with Public Safety Canada to assess the impacts of the first RCMP Regular Member Collective Agreement, ratified August 6, 2021, we continue to be concerned about the increasing costs of policing. Calculations for the GNWT's retroactive RCMP contract obligation and ongoing salary increases have yet to be finalized, but we know that there will be a significant financial impact.

As mentioned in the House, I am pleased to advise that a thorough review of operations of RCMP 'G' Division is underway and will gather information on best practices to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the Territorial police service. This will include analysis of the current policing operations in the NWT. The Department of Justice has contracted a third-party contractor, MNP, a consulting firm with extensive experience in policing, emergency response and community safety, to conduct the review. Once recommendations have been received, the Department will undertake a detailed analysis of these and share with Members and communities. RCMP 'G'

Some examples of recent work underway that 'G' Division is either leading or collaborating on and that benefits the people of the NWT include:

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- **Supporting Survivors of Sexual Assault**

RCMP “G” Division established territorial wide Sexual Assault Investigation Review Committee (SAIRC). This is one of the first in Canada. SAIRC is an oversight body that reviews unfounded sexual assault cases to ensure investigations are thorough, impartial, and properly classified, and also identifies systemic gaps or barriers. SAIRC has completed twenty-six investigation reviews. SAIRC feedback has contributed to the creation of a NT RCMP specific Sexual Assault Investigators Course of which 15 members are receiving training.

- **Supporting Community Wellness and Safety**

The Community Safety Officer Pilot in Fort Liard is the development of a community-based public safety program. The RCMP are a key partner in this initiative intended to provide a non-police response to social issues currently dealt with by the RCMP. This initiative also supports the development of community-based partnerships that enhance community wellness and safety.

- **Increased Specialized Investigative Resources**

Two specialized NWT Investigation Units have been established – Historical Case Unit and the Internet Child Exploitation Unit.

- **Reconciliation Awareness and Training**

The ‘G’ Division Commanding Officer’s Indigenous Consultative Committee (COICC) consists of nine Indigenous elders from throughout the NWT and meets twice a year. Elders provided valuable recommendations for cross-cultural training that RCMP employees receive when starting their employment in the NWT. Elders also recommended recruitment processes for local Indigenous applicants/ employees.

Other reconciliation related work includes the development and implementation of an RCMP “G” Division Reconciliation Strategy that:

- Explores definition and meaning of “Reconciliation” before identifying meaningful activities;
- Explores opportunities to understand Indigenous culture and historical impacts;
- Practices culturally based activities/initiatives focused on enhancing police and Indigenous relationships; and
 - Assesses information, data, and activities to identify where improvements can be made.

Thank you for your interest in policing in the territory. If you require further information, please contact my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R.J. Simpson', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

R.J. Simpson
Minister, Justice

- c. Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Deputy Minister, Justice
Legislative Coordinator, Executive and Indigenous Affairs