

Hoskins, Jeannie SG:EX

From: Morhart, David A SG:EX
Sent: Wednesday, September 15, 2010 12:17 PM
To: Seckel, Allan PREM:EX
Subject: CBC

CBCV, Page , 15-Sep-2010

Heed: RCMP's future in BC

By CBC On the Island

Gregor Craigie: The contract between the national police and the province is set to expire in the next two years. A draft 20-year contract is now being considered by BC's Solicitor General. But should he sign it? Joining us now with his thoughts is the former Solicitor General, Kash Heed. He's the MLA for Vancouver-Fraserview and the past chief of the West Vancouver police. Kash Heed, good morning to you.

Kash Heed: Good morning.

Craigie: Now, you've long advocated regional policing. What do you think the government should do about the RCMP's future in this province?

Heed: Well, certainly if we are looking at a future in the province of BC for the RCMP, we need to ensure that there are clauses enshrined in the contract to deliver the police service that the citizens of BC need. And that is, with an overall vision of having the most effective and accountable police service for British Columbia.

Craigie: That sounds like either a way out, or just a way to give the province some stick in those 20 years to ensure that the RCMP are doing that.

Heed: Well, we have this opportunity, and that's not going to come along for another 20 years. I can tell you, given the feedback that I've received from people from all over British Columbia, given the feedback from academics, given the feedback from police officers and my 31 years' experience in policing, and a short time as Solicitor General, we need to capitalize on this opportunity. Policing can be a lot better in the province of British Columbia than it is now. Our approaches to policing are just bandaid approaches at this particular time. So we have this opportunity, we need to capitalize on this opportunity, because at the end of the day, the people of British Columbia will be better served by their police service.

Craigie: When I first asked you what the government should do about the RCMP's future in British Columbia, you said "if we determine it's needed." Are you not convinced? Do you think perhaps a provincial force and bigger amalgamated regional forces for the big metropolitan areas are a better option?

Heed: I think those are options that need to be explored. Now, we cannot start over from a white sheet of paper and design a police service. If we were able to, we certainly wouldn't design what we have in British Columbia, what we have in metro Vancouver, what we have in the capital region on the Island the way it is now. We wouldn't design that. But that paper is a little grey right now, so we have to take the best we can out of our current system, make sure that we're able to mould it into something that's going to be a lot better and be able to deliver a more effective and accountable service. Because we don't have that to the extent the people of BC deserve at this particular time. Daily I pick up the paper or listen to your radio program, and there are criticisms with the current system. Daily I receive emails from people all over BC that are criticizing the service we have. So this opportunity is here now. BC needs to do the best thing for everyone in the province.

Craigie: Would having the RCMP fall under the BC Police Act change things?

Heed: Absolutely. If there was one critical clause, if the least we can get into that contract is to ensure that every police officer operating in the province of British Columbia under the provincial contract or in municipal agencies has to fall under the Police Act.... And I'm talking about the entire Police Act that covers civilian oversight, that covers governance, that covers use of force - all of that. The reason I'm saying that is that is the guiding piece of

legislation for ensuring we have an effective and accountable service in BC. So that should apply to every officer, regardless of the colour of their uniform.

That is something that is absolutely critical, because policing will change over the next 20 years, and we have to ensure in the province of British Columbia we have legislation that's going to guide those changes and move us into the contemporary era that we need to be in so the people of BC are best served. And if we don't include everyone in the province under that act, then we're going to be bound by that 20-year contract, and when we make changes to the Police Act to reflect the era that we're in, we're going to be bound by the RCMP, if we sign this contract, that govern or police 70 percent of the province of British Columbia. So that is a problem, and that's something that we need to ensure is in this contract.

Craigie: You said "be bound by a 20-year contract", and I appreciate that is what is, in a draft copy anyway, in front of the current Solicitor General. Why does it have to be a 20-year contract? The BC Civil Liberties Association has come out saying: "Fine, sign with the RCMP again. But make it for a shorter term. Make it for five years or so, to give the province more options." What do you think of that idea?

Heed: Well, I think what needs to be put in.... With some of these agencies, whether it's the RCMP or we look at a different system, we need to know that they're going to be here for a period of time. But what we need to have in that contract is an opting-out. If we're going to sign that contract with the RCMP and we're going to demand certain things for British Columbia, we have to ensure they're delivering. If they're not, we need to have an opt-out clause, about a three-year opt-out clause, because in my estimation of others, it will take three years for British Columbia to evolve into a different style of policing, whether it be a provincial force or whether it's a series of metro forces throughout British Columbia.

Craigie: Can an amalgamated RCMP regional force work in BC right now, do you think?

Heed: Well, that's something that could be looked at for an option, but it's going to be difficult, if in fact the RCMP are accountable to Ottawa under the federal act, not under the BC Police Act. And that's why I stress the critical option of falling under the act. You could do that if you had them under the BC Police Act. It'll be difficult, in my opinion and my experience, given the fact that they're accountable to Ottawa. Now, integration - this will be paraded by everyone as the greatest thing since sliced bread. I can tell you, there are problems with integration. Integration is better than what we had before, but it is a bandaid approach to what needs to be made here in British Columbia.

Craigie: But wouldn't integration solve a lot of problems in, say, metro Vancouver and greater Victoria?

Heed: It would if it's done correctly. If you look at greater Victoria, if you look at metro Vancouver, bringing that under one umbrella, under one leader, under one person that you could hold accountable, is certainly better than what we have right now with the balkanized system that is in place in two of these metro areas in the province of British Columbia. It would be better, but it would have to be done with one guiding principle, and that's under the BC Police Act, because in the capital region, you've got your series of municipal departments all with their own chiefs of police, you have the RCMP that operate in that area, all with their own structures, all with their own officer in charge. You've got a lot of people that are running these agencies, and there's not one person you could hold accountable for it. So if you could bring that under one umbrella, even the province of British Columbia.... In the policing world there's not one police officer in British Columbia, not one chief of police or deputy commissioner that you could hold accountable for policing the entire province of British Columbia. I find that very problematic. And in my research, in my academic studies, that is found to be very problematic in areas where that does occur.

Craigie: What role do you think the inquiry into the Pickton case might play in the decision the BC government could make?

Heed: A significant role. The Pickton problems are indicative of the systemic barriers we have with the current system. Vancouver did a very comprehensive research and recommendations with respect to what occurred in that. We have an inquiry that's going to take place. It's going to be critical that we listen to their findings, their recommendations with respect to it. But I can tell you, in my experience, unless we address these systemic barriers, and that's as a result of our structures here in BC, incidents like this - and of course I can tell you not to this magnitude or this atrocity of what happened in Pickton - will continue.

Craigie: Kash Heed, that's a sobering note to end on, but I appreciate you joining us nonetheless. Thank you for taking our call.

Heed: My pleasure.

Craigie: Vancouver-Fraserview MLA Kash Heed, and former Solicitor General as well. What do you think BC should do about this - the RCMP contract? Is it time for a regional police force? [zpz, pssg, xrz]

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From: Helen DARBYSHIRE [helen.darbyshire@rcmp-grc.gc.ca]
Sent: Tuesday, September 14, 2010 1:27 PM
To: XT:SG Bass, Gary SG:IN
Subject: Province Article - Sept. 14 2010

B.C. government flooded with calls for provincial police force: Documents

Former Mounties join letter campaign to not renew RCMP contract

By Sam Cooper, The Province September 14, 2010 11:02 AM Comments (12)
StoryPhotos (1)

Former Solicitor General Kash Heed has received hundreds of letters from B.C. citizens who are in favour of bringing back a provincial police force. Photograph by: Bruce Kemp, For The Province. Citizens have flooded the B.C. government with calls to boot the RCMP in favour of an in-house force, according to documents obtained by The Province under the Freedom of Information Act.

The government and the RCMP are negotiating the provincial policing contract, which is due to expire in 2012. In 2009 and 2010, citizens vented their rage against the Mounties with several hundred pages worth of letters to former Solicitor General Kash Heed.

In Dec. 2009, one man wrote: "At the present time the B.C. government has no control over RCMP members . . . As a retired member of the RCMP . . . it is my opinion that B.C. should go back to their original BC Provincial Police Service . . . personnel matters could be dealt with swiftly and the bad actors discharged."

In January 2010, another former officer wrote: "I implore you to not renew this contract and move toward the development of a provincial police force as in Ontario and other provinces."

"The taser event at Vancouver airport, and the scandalous affair of a senior Mountie with a witness in the case of the Surrey Six, are the last straws for me. The RCMP must be gone."

Another person wrote: "As a taxpayer I'm . . . demanding that you . . . discharge the RCMP and begin now to reform the BC Provincial Police."

Dr. Robert Gordon, a criminologist at Simon Fraser University and advocate of police reform in B.C., told The Province there is "widespread dissatisfaction" across B.C. with "the shenanigans that have come with the RCMP over the last three years."

Gordon has worked closely with Heed on pressing for police reform in B.C., and says the pair will meet this week with another reform advocate, former Vancouver police chief Robert Stewart, to strategize.

The three will push for disclosure of the RCMP's use of taxpayer dollars in B.C., ask for a high-level government inquiry into the current "malaise in provincial policing" and pressure for the inclusion of short-term escape clauses in the expected contract with the RCMP.

Gordon said it now appears all but certain that the government will renew the RCMP's services - but it could have been different.

Heed commissioned an audit trying to pin down how much the RCMP actually receives from

said. But Gordon says he understands the work in the report “was not followed up on,” after Heed resigned from his office in April 2010 while under an RCMP investigation into alleged election act violations.

A freedom of information request to access the RCMP services audit was turned down by government officials, citing the ongoing contract negotiations.

New Solicitor-General Mike de Jong is expected to review a draft version for a new RCMP contract this fall, with a final draft hoped to be signed by December, Gordon says.

“Everything de Jong is saying indicates that [the government] is not even considering a B.C. police force,” Gordon said.

Gordon criticized the “backroom dealing” in the current contract renewal process. Requests for interviews with Heed and de Jong were not granted.

In response to dozens of letters begging the government to axe the RCMP the Solicitor General’s office replied with form responses, including the point that “British Columbia would lose the 30 per cent contribution that the federal government pays toward the overall cost of the existing provincial police force.”

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