



PUBLIC INQUIRY RESPECTING GROUND SEARCH AND RESCUE FOR
LOST AND MISSING PERSONS

Transcript

Volume 12

Commissioner: Honourable Justice James Igloliorte

Tuesday

28 September 2021

CLERK (Mulrooney): All rise.

This commission of inquiry is now open.

James Igloliorte presiding as Commissioner.

Please be seated.

THE COMMISSIONER: Good morning, everyone.

Thank you, Marcella.

The first session of the St. John's – the Public Inquiry Respecting Ground Search and Rescue for Lost and Missing Persons at St. John's, rather, is now being conducted today.

Just a couple of housekeeping notices for everybody. As you can see, we're all wearing the face mask while we are seated in this room and then when you get to talk, speak right up to the microphone and you can remove your mask for those purposes, when you ask questions or when you're answering.

We'll begin by a round of introductions so that people who are not familiar to this process or the people in the – the others in the room, rather, can appreciate who's who and what role you're playing in the inquiry.

My name is James Igloliorte, as Marcella mentioned. I'm the Commissioner. We've had sessions in Labrador and different sessions across Newfoundland Island now and we'll finish up probably in a week or so with the hearings and then take some time to write our report based on the input of everyone involved.

So I'll start with Marcella; we'll go around. In Newfoundland, we'll follow the sun, as they say, and you can introduce yourself.

CLERK: Hi, my name is Marcella Mulrooney, and I'm the hearing Clerk, administrative staff for the inquiry.

Thank you.

P. RALPH: Good Morning.

My name is Peter Ralph and I'm counsel for the province.

M. RUMBOLT: Good morning, Commissioner.

My name is Mitch Rumbolt, I'm the director of the Emergency Services Division and we fall under the Department of Justice and Public Safety.

K. DIDHAM: Good morning.

My name is Sergeant Karen Didham, I'm a supervisor with the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary and I'm currently the coordinator for search and rescue within the RNC.

M. DAY: Good morning.

My name is Max Day, I'm with the – I'm a volunteer with the Rover Search and Rescue. I'm the current president for the team, and that's about it.

Thank you.

M. O'BRIEN: Good morning.

My name is Melanie O'Brien; I've been a volunteer with Rover Search and Rescue since 2017.

J. HICKEY: Good morning.

I'm Jack Hickey; I'm a volunteer with Rover Search and Rescue. I've been involved with them for maybe 30 years now. I guess my job is – I do some training with their specialty teams and I'm probably one of the team leads that's actually on the ground going for searches.

Thank you.

P. FRENCH: Good morning.

My name is Paul French; I'm a member of Rovers Ground Search and Rescue. I've been with the team for about 14 years. I started as a searcher and worked my way up to play many active roles with the team throughout, so.

H. BLACKMORE: Harry Blackmore, Newfoundland and Labrador Search and Rescue Association.

L. BRADLEY: Good morning.

Louise Bradley, mental health consultant to the inquiry.

R. STEELE: My name is Ruth Steele; I'm the administrator for the Ground Search and Rescue inquiry.

P. CARTER: Good morning.

My name is Paul Carter; I'm an executive director with the Department of Justice and Public Safety and executive contact on the inquiry.

T. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

My name is Tom Williams; I'm legal counsel for the family of Burton Winters, as well as consultant for any of the families requiring legal assistance during the course of the inquiry.

R. SMITH: Richard Smith, the ground search and rescue subject-matter expert on SAR. I'm also a practitioner with Mountain View Search and Rescue in Alberta.

G. BUDDEN: Good morning.

My name is Geoff Budden. I am commission counsel. My role is to assist Commissioner Igloliorte and to also be mindful of the public interest.

THE COMMISSIONER: Go ahead, Sir.

G. BUDDEN: Yes. Good morning, Mr. Commissioner.

We have, as you noted earlier, been active in Makkovik, Labrador; in Corner Brook; and Grand Falls, Newfoundland. And we've heard direct evidence from search teams from Makkovik, also from Bay of Islands, Corner Brook, Deer Lake, the Bonne Bay Search and Rescue team, the Red Indian Lake Search and Rescue team and the Exploits Search and Rescue team. We have looked at several different searches and different types of searches. And today we are in St. John's and we are hearing evidence from the Rovers Search and Rescue team and from other individuals who have something to contribute with regard to the searches we are looking at today.

The search we – as an inquiry with a mandate to inquire into search and rescue in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, we are attempting to look at different types of searches to see what can be learned from how they were carried out. Today, we are looking at a search, in some ways, a series of searches, for a gentleman who had a particular health challenge, which required a certain approach to the search that would be different from some of the searches we've examined elsewhere.

There will be a number of records, which we'll shortly enter as exhibits. I will also, Mr. Commissioner, pursuant to your authority under the terms of reference and under the enabling legislation, ask for you to order a publication ban on any information which may identify the individual who was the subject of this search and that, obviously, would include his name, also his residence, his date of birth. We will file the formal order if you choose to grant it later on today.

And I would remind participants here today to refer to the individual as John Doe. I understand that it may inadvertently slip out. If that were to happen, I would again remind everybody in the room that if the Commissioner chooses to grant the publication ban, it would be an offence to publish his name in any media or otherwise disseminate it.

So if it please you, Mr. Commissioner, I ask that you so order the publication ban that I spoke of with a formal order to follow (inaudible).

THE COMMISSIONER: Counsel wish to speak to the motion?

P. RALPH: No, thank you, Commissioner. I have no submissions on the motion.

T. WILLIAMS: No objection, (inaudible), Mr. Commissioner.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

In the interest of public interest what the mandate of the inquiry is, is to ensure that we are forward looking in establishing recommendations for the province to review, recognizing that our main interest is not to bring attention to any particular individual. We're not

interested in assigning blame to anybody or any person.

As a consequence, I find that the application of a publication ban should be applied in this particular case.

G. BUDDEN: Thank you, Mr. Commissioner.

We have certain exhibits that we wish to introduce this morning, I believe about six in total. We have – in the sequencing of it, we had anticipated entering one particular exhibit; we are going to hold off on that for now. We may enter it later today or tomorrow, or it may remain a confidential exhibit. So apologies to Madam Clerk. It probably has interfered with her sequencing of exhibits, but we'll work with that.

So, Madam Clerk, perhaps you could identify the exhibits and we shall enter them.

CLERK: They will be exhibit numbers P-185, 186, 187, 188, 189.

G. BUDDEN: Thank you.

And –

CLERK: You have the exhibits there.

G. BUDDEN: I do, thank you.

Exhibit 185 is a general occurrence report from the RNC; as is 186, a different such report.

Madam Clerk, what is 187? I don't seem to have that one here in front of me.

CLERK: Rovers SAR, it looks like a compilement of –

G. BUDDEN: Yeah, that's a two-page document, I believe.

CLERK: Yes.

G. BUDDEN: Yes, that is a document – we'll entitle it when we get to the list of exhibits, but it is a submission from the Rovers Search and Rescue team.

THE COMMISSIONER: 188 – you're asking what the 188 is.

G. BUDDEN: Yes, Madam Clerk, what would 188 be?

CLERK: Just let me bring it up. Maps –

G. BUDDEN: Yes, these –

CLERK: – from search and rescue.

G. BUDDEN: This is about a six-page document that is maps and a brief search team assignment, also from the Rovers Search and Rescue team.

And 189 is also a document from the Rovers Search and Rescue team, which is an account of – a detailed account of a search that took place on a – starting on November 7, 2000.

Now, Mr. Commissioner, how we – how I plan to propose to proceed today, which is as we've done in the other searches, certain members of the search and rescue team who have introduced themselves already are present today, I'm going to ask them to – through the – primarily through the – for Mr. French, who I understand was search leader with regard to one of these searches, to walk us through the techniques and strategies they used in this particular search and the particular challenges of this search.

We will then ask the team to address matters of concern to them and matters of public interest with regard to their organization, resources and so forth. And, as previously has happened, the counsel will be given the opportunity to examine these witnesses. As of course, the Commissioner, yourself, may question them at any time.

We will – we also have here Sergeant Karen Didham, who is the search and rescue, as we've heard – the search and rescue coordinator for the RNC, the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary. She would have been involved with these searches and may have a contribution to make, as may Mr. Harry Blackmore, who is a member of this particular team – even though we have heard from him in many capacities as president of Newfoundland and Labrador Search and Rescue Association. So he may contribute as

well, as may Mr. Richard Smith, our retained expert.

The context for these searches, this particular individual was the subject, I believe, of – and I'll just say this by way of a preamble – four particular searches. He was a resident of assisted-living facilities in the greater St. John's area and on four occasions, I believe, left those homes and became subject of a search. The search and rescue team is focusing on one of those searches in particular, but it may – the fact that there are multiple searches is relevant to some of the strategies that were employed in this search and some of the decisions that had to be made and some passing reference may be made to those other searches.

So, perhaps at this point, I'll go back to the search and rescue team and we've already heard from them, their role with the team and so forth. So I'll go to Mr. Paul French and direct my –

THE COMMISSIONER: If I could just interrupt you for a second.

G. BUDDEN: Yeah.

THE COMMISSIONER: In preparation of the witnesses speaking, have you directed them to use the John Doe notification, or will that be redacted after they speak? (Inaudible.)

G. BUDDEN: They have certainly been advised of the – when we met yesterday and again this morning that to refer to the search subject as John Doe, or Mr. Doe or John, as they may wish. But certainly not by his true name.

And, as I said earlier, it is entirely possible that through inadvertence that may – that the true name may be spoken. And if that happens that's unfortunate, but I've been involved in another court process where that has happened and the media understand that the publication ban is in existence. So even if the name is inadvertently spoken that doesn't remove the necessity of everybody obeying the ban.

THE COMMISSIONER: Fair enough.

Thank you.

G. BUDDEN: Thank you.

So, Mr. French, perhaps you could, if you feel it helpful, you can add to me very brief – setting, I guess, the context for this search, and then walk us through your particular involvement as search manager and walk us through this search, as we discussed in our previous dealings, the level of detail you feel necessary to show us how the search was conducted. And you can as well refer to your – the documents that we've shared, the search summary and so on. And when you do refer to it, perhaps you can just identify which one you are referring to and Madam Clerk can call it up on the screen so we can all see it.

P. FRENCH: Thank you very much.

I will be referring to – from my notes, as Exhibit 189, but I think for the best purposes and understanding of exactly what we done, I think we can stick with Exhibit 074.

So, as mentioned, we received a request from the RNC to respond to a – or they requested a search for an individual who had gone missing from a residence on Foxtrap Access Road in CBS – Conception Bay South – and we arrived at that scene, you know, mid-morning, 8:49 on November the 7th.

As mentioned, this was the fourth separate call in a two-month span for the same individual. In total we spent about, I think it was a maximum of eight separate days searching for this individual over the span of four different searches. So, with that in mind, I mean, we had some previous knowledge as to who this individual was and tendencies that they may have had.

The reason we were called is because Mr. Doe had left his residence at 4:30 the previous evening. He had – he never left the residence out of frustration or anything else, he simply left to – what we were described as to have a smoke and the individual did not return.

So we responded to the scene that morning on November the 7th and we had 24 searchers attend the scene in total. I was the lead search manager for our team. We also had another search manager on scene, Joel Hickey, and it is typical of our team that if we can – you know, two is better than one. So if we have two on

scene, we will utilize each other, you know, to bounce ideas and discuss and whatnot.

Constable Andrews attended with the RNC; she is one of the coordinators as well. Sergeant Didham is the main coordinator for GSAR, but there's a number of other coordinators who work with her in the role who attend our searches to help manage and remain in the incident command of the scene.

So although the RNC are the incident commanders, they are in charge of the scene and they have ultimate authority, we very much work as a team in any decisions that we make. We kind of have the search and rescue knowledge, so we, you know, compare ideas, and discuss things and make a plan and move on from there.

Because this individual had – this was our fourth separate incident, we had to take into account some things that we've learned about this individual from past searches. But at this particular – one nuance that we had with this particular search is that this was a new residence for this individual. He was only there a short while. So he was in one residence in CBS and he was moved, I would say, about a kilometre and a half away to a separate residence where, in this case, is where he went missing from.

In planning and prepping for a search, there's sort of a six-step process that you're kind of going through. You know, we have – we get there on scene, Constable Andrews arrived on scene, we're trying to put a plan in place and understand what exactly went wrong, you know, receiving statements from the other officers, responding officers on the scene. Meanwhile we have, you know, 20-odd individuals, trained searchers, who are out by the door just waiting to be released to go – you know, get their tasking to go find the individual.

So there's an awful lot that takes place in the beginning of a search. And in the command post and as search manager I'm working with Constable Andrews, as IC. You know, we're doing the scene sign up, scene size up; we're taking into account what exactly happened, any information that we received from the residence in which he was staying or caregivers. We're taking into account things that this individual

had done in the past and we're determining our goals, objectives; so we're mapping out a search area. And maybe, you know – and I don't know if it's best to speak to it here, but we can pull up – if you can – Madam Clerk, if you can pull up page 11 in that exhibit. What that – on page 11 is an image of the area where we were and some drawings on a map.

So in that image there – and it's kind of hard to see – but within that red circle that's a 300-metre perimeter. So that's surrounding the residence where Mr. Doe had left. We were set up pretty much across the street in a parking lot where we'd set up command.

And the reason we started with this area, this particular area, is for many reasons. And with any search, you have to determine – or, I guess, to determine a search area there are four things you have to account for. So there's theoretical reasoning, there's – so theoretical reasoning is basically how far can this individual go? What is their maximum distance? You know, he was gone since 4:30 yesterday, he's not much of a walker or a hiker, how far could he have been? You have to take into account any statistical information, so things like we reference a lost – the *Lost Person Behavior*, which I know has been talked about before. We also have to use subjective reasoning, so because we had a history with this individual we have to take into account those sorts of things, and area landscapes and whatnot, and then also deductive reasoning. So it's kind of just your intuition as to where he could have been and reasons why you think that.

G. BUDDEN: If I may just jump in. I'll try not to do this too much, but – and then I will – we all have questions for you at the end.

But you used the term: lost person behaviours. I know what you mean and you know what you mean, but perhaps for the benefit of the public and listeners you can explain what exactly you mean by that term: lost person behaviours.

P. FRENCH: No. Thank you. Feel free to jump in at any time.

So when I refer to our statistical reasoning, we often, as searchers, refer to – our guideline for that is a *Lost Person Behavior* book, which was

authored by Robert Koester. And in that book it gives us a good understanding and breakdown of different characteristics for different – either user groups, whether they're hikers, skiers, children or, and in this case, despondence. And based on, you know, a statistical analysis that the author and his team put together, we have to take into account basically – in previous searches we've known that despondence typically go to these areas, they're known to – you know, 50 per cent can stay within a 800-metre radius. And so we have to take into account all that sort of information and that's what we get from the *Lost Person Behavior* book. And that's, again, only a part of determining our search area for any given search.

G. BUDDEN: Thank you. And perhaps you can just continue with your narrative at the point I interrupted you.

P. FRENCH: No problem.

So for this particular search, initially, because we had so much of a – we've dealt with this individual many times. We initiated a general search area, 300-metre perimeter around where this individual was to and that mainly because he was located multiple times before in less than 200 metres from his place of residence. So that's why we went with the 300 metre. We also initiated multiple hasty teams in vehicles, in unmarked vehicles.

G. BUDDEN: And perhaps you could tell us what a hasty team is.

P. FRENCH: Sorry, yes.

So a hasty team is a quick-search team. So you're sending them in an area of high probability. You know, we're going to check spots where this individual was last found; where he frequent. So it's very much a hasty search. It's – given some of the reasonings, we feel that he's in these locations. So it's not as through as a grid search or a line search may be, it's very hasty and you're sending them to different areas to check different areas.

So that's what we – we started off by sending out multiple hasty teams. We follow that up later on with more police officers. We actually had

them attend the scene in plain clothes and they were operating unmarked vehicles. And the reason for using unmarked vehicles this time was that in previous cases this individual verbalized to us that he would hide from us; he knew we were looking for him. He could recognize searchers. He could recognize police officers. And, basically, quite frankly, he stayed away from everybody. If he was walking down the trail and he seen somebody he would dip into the woods. So the reason that we use unmarked vehicles was so that we could kind of disguise ourselves to look like anybody else driving down the road.

So our first task was to send out those hasty teams and our second task was we had three search teams on this particular search. And we divided up those search teams to search the areas within that 300-metre perimeter. Now, where do we start? We have to use natural boundaries. So a few main boundaries here was the CBS Highway and the Foxtrap Access Road. There was a river behind the individual's – where the individual was living. So we use these natural boundaries, which is where I – so this is just quick. What I done on scene is using a marker, drawing over a map and I would draw out an area; I would give it a number based on the probability of that individual being in that area, and then I assigned the team to that area.

So we had three teams, so we had area 1, 2 and 3 searched initially. And those areas were – the search started out a little hasty, but we worked our way in to grid searching each one of those areas, which you probably typically wouldn't do on a search for, you know, a general missing person, a missing berry-picker, a missing child, but because this individual, we knew, was hiding from us in the past and was afraid of us, it was very important that we do a grid search in this scenario to ensure that basically no stone was uncovered. (Inaudible) we're looking for clues; we're looking for articles of clothing and whatnot.

G. BUDDEN: Is the next page in this exhibit – perhaps, Madam Clerk, is this next page – no, it's perhaps a different exhibit. I have an exhibit in front of me that has a number of – handwritten with 12 areas on it. Is that what you're referring to just then?

P. FRENCH: I did have that for this search, but that one was actually pertinent to Operational Period 2, so that was the next day.

G. BUDDEN: Okay, I'll let you go back to your narrative, thank you. We'll get to that.

P. FRENCH: Okay. We can refer to it if it makes sense. But what Mr. Budden is referring to is that I would've had a separate set of handwritten notes to go with this map, and I would've had the boundaries defined. So in area 1 I would've defined it as the boundary is, you know, south of Conception Bay Highway, east of Foxtrap Access Road, so on and so forth. And I believe in the communication logs those areas are defined as well.

So we sent out our search teams and as – and we have to give the search team an area that is – that they're capable of searching in a realistic manner. So, you know, you don't want to give a team an area that is going to take them eight hours to search. It's better to give them – you know, to divvy it up into chunks and give them areas which they can search in a number of hours with the proper amount of people.

After we sent out both of our teams, we are then – you know, in the command post, you kind of had the main, initial attack planned and searchers on the ground and the search taking place, so then you kind of got to reassess, you know – and this – all this is done within the hour, probably less, so now you're trying to reassess your scene and say: Okay, now what do we have out? What else do we need? Who else can we get to help with this? In this particular case, this morning – I should refer to the weather – it was damp. It wasn't cold, but I mean it was getting chilly. It was in the low teens. It was fairly windy. It was – the wind was 50 kilometres an hour and we had poor visibility in the morning, but it cleared off in the afternoon.

I know Constable Andrews and I discussed the use of a helicopter initially and when we first arrived on scene, you know, it was – there was very poor visibility and was definitely not able to have a helicopter sitting on scene, as they wouldn't be able to operate. So Constable Andrews contacted the Canadian Coast Guard and asked if they were able to aid in our search

and to search the waters just off Conception Bay around the Foxtrap marina.

A short while later, they confirmed that they would send a – due to the wind, they weren't sure if the IRB, so the inshore rescue base with a small, I believe it's a 7.6-metre, rigid-hull inflatable boat – they weren't sure if they could respond to the scene. They were also checking into getting the *Ann Harvey*, which is a ship out of St. John's. At that time, it was in St. John's to respond to the scene. We heard back from them that they did send the inshore rescue team out to search the harbour – or search from Long Pond, and they actually searched the shoreline as far as Holyrood. So quite a fair distance in either direction. And we also heard confirmation that the Canadian Coast Guard *Ann Harvey* was attending – would attend the scene. It was making its way from St. John's harbour.

As we went throughout our day, the weather did start to clear off and Constable Andrews did put in a request for helicopter support from Fire and Emergency Services. And that request was approved and a helicopter arrived on scene a short time later. That was around 12:30 in the day, a helicopter arrived on scene. So – and as this is going on, again, we have teams finishing up one area and we're sending them to another area and – so all this is continuing on. We're continuing to get information from the scene and from the witnesses, we'll say.

One thing, I guess, I neglected to say Constable Andrews done right away is that we put out a public safety announcement regarding Mr. Doe so that we can inform the public to keep an eye out for him. Another thing that we done to work on containment is we actually contacted the local taxi cab company in CBS, who was actually helpful in past searches, in helping locate Mr. Doe. We actually contacted them and asked if any of their drivers had seen this individual and also asked them to keep an eye out for him, you know, over that day and coming days.

So that was part of a passive containment. The active containment was also those hasty teams that were out on the road searching for this individual. So although our grid search was contained to this 300-metre perimeter, we covered a much larger area by doing roving road

searches and whatnot through vehicles, you know, and we would send both searchers and RNC patrol officers to different areas.

So in some of these particular cases – or in some of these notes here in the communication file you'll see that we received a call that there was an abandoned house nearby. So someone came to the command post and notified us that, you know, this house is abandoned and there's no one been there; it might be a spot where this individual could be staying. So then, we would send one of those hasty teams to that area to complete a search of that area.

We also identified a number of areas within the map here that we said: Okay, well, these are, you know, abandoned sheds or whatnot; we want these hasty teams to go check these areas as well.

In the morning, we received from a call from a business who was not far outside of our area in the – off the Foxtrap Access Road. It was a daycare, I believe, and they notified us or let us know that their alarm had went off in the early mornings of November 7. We sent two RNC officers up there to check the premises and speak with the individuals. But it was determined that this was a false alarm, that no entry had been made into the presence – into the premises and, you know, we did search the premises regardless, but that's – it was determined that it was a false alarm.

Shortly after the helicopter had landed, typically what we would do is get the helicopter – you know, depending on the situation, typically we try to get the helicopter to shut down, we'll bring the pilot into the command post, we would show him this map, you know, we have a screen in the back of our command post, we would show him this map, brief him on the individual, what we are doing on the ground and what we want the helicopter to do in the air.

And exhibit – or, sorry, the same exhibit on page 13 you can actually see a track that was completed by the helicopter throughout the day. So, again, this was a series of searches. You can see there where he has landed at the – or near the command post. And what we got the helicopter to do was to complete a search around the place last seen, where we were searching, span out,

take into account the shoreline off the coast there and check areas where he had been located previously.

And we also got them to actually go up Foxtrap Access Road out towards the highway because that was an access for Mr. Doe if had decided – previous history and our understanding is that he wasn't from the area, he's from out of town, and that maybe – we decided, you know, maybe he might be trying to get back home, maybe he tried to get out to the highway or whatnot. So we had the helicopter focus on those areas, dirt roads, trails and whatnot, heading towards the highway and towards that area.

If, Madam Clerk, we can go to page 12 in that exhibit. And what we see here is a tracking map, okay? So all of our teams have radios that track on a system and as we put teams out, whether it be in a helicopter, in line searches, hasty teams or whatnot, we track their radios with our repeater system.

G. BUDDEN: Perhaps just tell us a little bit about that again, when you say track them. Just tell us a little more what you, in fact, are doing.

P. FRENCH: So there's a computer system set up in our command post, which actually tracks each one of those personal – or those radios that we hand out. And what happens is it doesn't live track them. We can't see every single location they were. It actually pings them. So we can set the intervals that we want to receive a ping from the radio. So if we were sending a radio in the helicopter, we would set it to ping every three seconds. Whereas, if we were sending it with a hasty team or a line search, we would set it to ping probably every 30 to 60 seconds. Excuse me.

And what we see here – so then every radio tracks a different colour and we can set – our radio operator would set these up so that each one of these tracks would be defined by a team or an individual or an asset such as a helicopter or a unit number or whatnot. And what we see here on this particular map is the area in which we had covered on November 7.

And I can see on my version here, which you may not be able to see – you may be able to see on your paper copy – is that there was a number

of dots at this location up around Butler's Road, so probably on the south side of this map in that there aren't lines attached. So it looks like this image was actually taken before the program was finished loading all the lines on the map. So the pings are there but the lines aren't attached. But, again, this is the area in which we searched on November 7.

We searched until about 4 o'clock or so in the evening with no success. We had RNC officers go to all the businesses in the area; speak to them; check their security camera footage; ask them if they'd seen this individual. We had no luck, no clues. We haven't found any articles of clothing, any footprints, nothing.

It was determined at this time that we would finish the search for the day. We knew that looking for this individual in the nighttime – although it can be done, we were already severely disadvantaged looking for this individual and that disadvantage would've been tenfold in the nighttime because we would've had to use flashlights and whatnot to look for him; he would've been alerted much sooner that we were out in the area looking for him. So it was determined that we wouldn't search throughout the night and that we would assemble the next morning. And – but I do recall that the patrol that was on duty that night was notified of our presence there and that if they did have any other sightings or whatnot, to contact us right away and that we would respond.

That's a wrap-up for day one. I'm not sure if you want me to continue to day two or if you have questions on that one.

G. BUDDEN: Mr. Commissioner, would it be your preference that we finish the search and then have questions or take it day by day? I think in this case, perhaps, to finish it might make the best sense.

Thank you.

(Inaudible) carry on.

P. FRENCH: Thank you.

So on day two – so that was a Sunday, November 8, 2020 – we actually put a call out for mutual aid services from – or to, sorry,

Central Avalon Ground Search and Rescue. So they're our neighbouring team; they're located out of Holyrood. The reason we done that is that we needed – we wanted to expand our search area; we needed as many individuals as possible to cover off this area within this – you know, the daylight hours. You know, we're getting into the fall of the year and the days are much shorter and whatnot.

And, quite frankly, we were also having – we were getting some resistance, I guess, from our own searchers in that, again, we're into day eight or – day seven or day eight here of searching for this individual, you know, over 1,600 hours in total, looking for this one individual who had kept getting – or not getting lost, but who had kept leaving his residence and thus causing a search, so we had to go look for him. So you can appreciate that some of the searchers, you know, there was some frustration as to is there enough being done? How did he get away again? How is this happening? You know, so those sorts of those things, so that was another reason why we ended up having to call in another neighbouring team to help out with that search.

So on the second day, we had 35 searchers in total. We had 12 from Central Avalon Ground Search and Rescue and we had 23 from our own team. Constable Debbie Andrews arrived on scene again as incident command and myself and fellow Rover, Randy Biddiscombe played the role as search manager.

The goal was much the same as the previous day. I know Debbie, Joel and myself had – or Constable Andrews, sorry – had some discussions prior to finishing up that search and we had anticipated what we were going to do the next day. I, in turn, actually ended up doing some more work that evening: printing out maps, assigning areas and whatnot. So there was – we had that ability to be able to be prepared for the next day so that when we arrived on scene and we had 30-odd searchers or whatnot, they weren't waiting for us to develop a plan; we had a plan in place. And granted if there was any change in information that morning, you know, that plan would have changed, but in this case there wasn't.

We arrived on scene around 8 a.m. Constable Andrews had ensured that Mr. Doe had not been located or had not returned to the residence. She had also previously put in a request for helicopter support again that day to continue on with the search and she had made contact with the Canadian Coast Guard whom which stayed on scene. So the *Ann Harvey* stayed on scene that night so that they could help out the next morning.

If we could go to page 15, maybe. So this was a map I created, again, based on determining the search area. It was an expansion of the area before, so this is an 800 – so that yellow line there is a 800-metre perimeter from place last seen. We were set up – because we had more searchers and more assets we set up at the Foxtrap marina and I had to sign these areas again in accordance to – they were all given a number, but as we sent out teams they were all sent out based on probability of detection – of probability of this individual being in that location.

As stated, there was a lot of pre-work done on this the night before so when we arrived on scene, we had briefed all the team leaders – well, we had briefed all the searchers but, individually, we briefed the team leaders, brought them into command posts. We gave them this map. We told them what area we wanted them to search, that we wanted them to complete a grid search, And a grid search is basically, again, we are taking those areas and we're divvying them up and they're completing a series of line search to ensure that there's no individual, there's no article of clothing or whatnot in that area.

G. BUDDEN: This might be a good time to tell us in a little more detail what you mean when you use the terms grid searches and line searches.

P. FRENCH: Right, so – again, each one of these areas as numbered – you can see that I just used a red marker in an application on my computer and I just drew lines over natural boundaries. So each on of these lines, they're not just – I never just drew them there; they're drawn on top of a roadway, a river, or a coastline or some natural boundary so that the searchers – I could define an area for the

searchers. So then, each team would understand their boundary. So much like before, if it was, you know, south of Conception Bay Highway, east of Foxtrap Access Road as far as Tundra Place or whatnot, that was their particular boundary.

So what a team leader would do then is take their team, head to that area and they would determine how best to search that area in – with regards to a series of line searches. So they would line up in a line, much like we are here at this table, with their critical spacing. So meaning that they would be separated far enough away so that if there was a notepad in the middle of the floor, they would be able to see that notepad. So although we were looking for a missing person, we are still looking for clues and whatnot – articles of clothing, sneakers, or whatnot.

So – and they would complete a series of line search within that grid. They would pivot. One individual on one side of the line would mark, using flagging tape or whatnot. So they would mark their line and they would take bearings and whatnot on compasses to make sure they had a straight line and then they would pivot on – so if Max was on the end of the line, Max would put a flag as we went along and then we would all pivot on Max. So I would end up on the other wall here of this room and then I would flag on the way back and Max would pick up his flagging tape that he had laid out. So that you are ensuring that you are covering every inch of that area, that there is nothing left there. So that's how a grid search is completed.

You know, this was a significant area. We had 35 or so searchers. I mean, this took quite a bit of time to do. So each one of these areas typically took, on average, probably three to four hours for a team to complete. And these teams were set up in teams of, you know, seven or eight individuals and they would go out and search these areas. As teams would finish an area, you know, it may be an opportunity for them to come back to the command post, we would give them a break, hydrate them, get them something to eat and whatnot and then they would go back out and continue searching.

In addition to the grid search of the area, we also had, again, these – we had a number of members in personal vehicles who were going out

completing road searches. We sent a number of teams to go back again and search areas where Mr. Doe had been located before. We had officers, again, going back and checking with businesses to see if Mr. Doe had been there or if they had seen them. We had communication with the taxi service again. And, again, we were expanding out beyond this 800 metre, but this particular circle was 100 per cent grid searched, everything inside of that 800-metre perimeter.

The reason we stayed in the same area, you know, you might say: Well, why did you search this area again? You searched it yesterday, you know, to a smaller extent. Was that – we knew that this individual could have very much been still mobile, he may have been moving about and we thought that maybe he knew if we had searched an area that he could go back there and maybe we wouldn't go back and search that area again. So maybe he thought that that area might have been a safe place for him to go back to. So that's why we went back to this particular area and done it again and expanded up on that.

In the morning, we had a helicopter arrive on scene fairly early at 8:40 in the morning. The weather was much better this day. It was still a bit risky, it was colder this day, the wind was from the north and – but it was clear. We assigned the helicopter to search the areas around the place last seen, this 800-metre perimeter, a coastline search up as far as Holyrood, down as far as – I believe we went as far as St. Philips on the coastline. Actually, I believe we went as far as Bauline on the coastline with a shoreline search.

We also actually had the helicopter – after these taskings, we had them complete again all of the gravel pits, dirt roads, ATV trails and roadways up to the highway. We had them actually go from St. John's to Whitbourne on the highway to see if he, this individual, was on the highway, was he trying to hitchhike, maybe was he on the side of the highway, you know, hiding out of sight. So, again, we went as far as Foxtrap and back as far as St. John's with no luck.

I didn't mention also that, you know, there's one thing that we done on this particular search, not just did we send out officers and members in plain clothes and plain vehicles, we also – when it was safe to do so, we asked the searchers not

to wear their SAR vest and although, you know, we want to be seen in this particular area, it was felt because we're in an urban area, we weren't crossing too many roadways and whatnot that it was safe to do so, but, wherever possible, we asked our searchers to wear more of plain clothes or not so high vis, not to look different than other people so that, again, we could blend in with the public and maybe Mr. Doe wouldn't recognize us before we seen him.

This type of searching went on throughout the day. There was – again, there was no sightings of Mr. Doe. At one point, I believe there was – the RNC received a notification that I believe it was one of the taxis that they may have had a sighting of the individual. There was two officers sent to interview this individual, nothing come of it. There was no clear definitive evidence to say that this was the individual we were looking for. We also received another possible sighting, I believe from the Dollar Store on the CBS Highway. The RNC officers were sent there as well to check footage and to talk to the individuals, the cashiers and that, in to the store. Again, nothing came back as to confirm that it was (inaudible).

This search was funny in that we had no video footage of (inaudible), and in previous searches we had managed to hone in on him and –

UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: We should remind (inaudible).

G. BUDDEN: Just a reminder to use the reference to Mr. Doe.

Thank you.

P. FRENCH: Sorry, yes.

In previous searches, we had picked up this individual on video footage, security cameras from other businesses and whatnot in the area and we were able to determine a route of travel, where this individual was going and whatnot. In this particular case, we had nothing. We had no idea that we – all we knew was that he had left for a smoke and he didn't return; what way he went – nothing. There was no one – no other of his peers in the area had any indication of where he had went.

The Coast Guard, again, they were there. As mentioned, they were there on scene. Right as we started our search in the morning, the wind was still up, so instead of sending out a fast rescue craft out of Long Pond, the *Ann Harvey* deployed one of its fast rescue crafts to check the harbours and shoreline while the *Ann Harvey* completed a grid search of the area of Conception Bay. Again, no success.

It was determined, again, just before 4 o'clock, that we would conclude the search for the day. No evidence found, no further information as to where he could have been. The family was updated; Constable Andrews was in constant communication with the family, updating them on what we were doing and if they had any more additional information. And I know in particular we had reached out to Sergeant Hutchings to inform him that if they had any other sightings of this individual throughout the night, that we would – to contact us right away and we could go up with our drone and do a search of the area.

I know our drone had come up in the past during these round tables and in previous – other sections of the province, and you might say: Well, why didn't you use the drone here? There were several reasons. Weather was one reason. It was quite gusty both days we were there. Also, the fact that we were in, you know, a semi-urban environment, due to Transport Canada regulations, we're not allowed to fly our drone over roadways – public roadways – without them being shut down and whatnot. So we would and we had – in previous searches for this individual, we had utilized the drone. So if we had a particular area of interest that we could send a drone team to go search a particular area, we would do that. In this case, we didn't have this; it was very much more urban, a lot of open fields and whatnot, close towards the water, so it was easily searched by the helicopter and our search teams.

As I said, they were notified that we were there if need be, but because there was no information on this individual that we had concluded the search just prior to dusk that night.

That completed day two. I'm not sure if you want me to reference other days of the search or how the individual was located. I don't know if

Sergeant Didham wants to speak to that or whatnot.

G. BUDDEN: Did the Rover Search and Rescue team continue beyond day two in this particular instance?

P. FRENCH: Yes. So we had completed our search for that day, but we – everybody was very much aware that we were – the RNC – I'm sure Sergeant Didham can speak to it, but I know their patrol services continued to keep an eye out and check with businesses and check with the home and whatnot. So I mean, we were kind of stood down as a search team but, you know, we knew that we could respond at any time, and that was a mutual feeling between the Rovers and RNC.

We were requested again on the 11th of November, so a couple of days later, to go out and complete a – because the weather was much more favourable, we had picked out a couple of high probability areas that we wanted the drone team to go up and complete a search of a few areas. During that time, a few members also went again and checked areas where this individual had frequent before. So there was still work being done basically to find this individual.

G. BUDDEN: Just perhaps you could tell us how a drone search actually works, using this case as an example.

P. FRENCH: Yup. So the – our particular drone, you know, it can be utilized in many different fashions. We have a zoom camera that can – you know, a combination of digital and optical zoom of up to 180 times. So I mean when we're at our building in Paradise, I can actually zoom in on the Town of Brigus and I can count the houses and tell you how many windows and doors they have. You know, if there is a sign above the door, I can't tell you what it reads, but you can make it out. So it is a very, very good camera.

We also have a FLIR camera, so a forward-looking infrared. That camera is paired with another visual lens so it actually pick ups shadows and – so, like, some FLIR, you know, basic FLIR cameras can only pick up actual temperatures; this one can actually pick up

shadows, you know, and images. It doesn't necessarily just have to be temperature related.

G. BUDDEN: There is a bit of terminology there that, thus, the commission has heard over the last number of days, but perhaps for the general public you could explain a little bit about what FLIR is, what it stands for, how it works.

P. FRENCH: So FLIR, forward-looking infrared, what it does basically, in a nutshell, it scans an area and it shows you an image of actual temperature. So we can use different colour palettes. So, you know, a typical one you would see on a TV show would be of a fusion palette. So you would see orange, blues, purples, red. So the darker something is the colder that image is – or that particular item is and then the hotter something is the more orange it would be.

So we use a series of different palettes depending on day and night, if we're looking for an individual, a boat, you know, and it is important with our FLIR, I mean, the camera itself – just the camera – FLIR camera for our drone, which is not much bigger than my cellphone is over \$20,000 to purchase for our drone. So it picks up the actual temperature, whereas some FLIR or, you know, thermal imaging cameras, they would pick up relevant temperature. So it is very good if you have a high canopy, so, you know, large growth of an area, you know, a lot of trees and whatnot we can – we've picked up rabbits. We've picked up birds' nests. We've picked up lots of stuff with it. So that's why we would use that in combination with our zoom camera. We would identify a target and then use our zoom camera then to determine whether that target was what we were looking for or of no relevance.

So –

G. BUDDEN: So just – not to look at this, I guess, in too much detail, but you're telling me that this combination of FLIR and the zoom camera, your drone is in the air, it is scanning an area, it spots a heat pattern which shows up as a flash of red against a darker background and you have people who are trained to, I guess, recognize those patterns. You then zoom the camera in so you can see what's causing that flash of heat, that flash of red and you can

determine whether it's a person, a rabbit or some artificial thing.

P. FRENCH: Correct.

And, you know, given this case we were, you know, three or four days down the road since the individual had been missing. The individual could've been on the ground. You know, just because an individual could have been deceased or whatnot, it doesn't mean we can't still – it's not an effective tool. Because, again, it would – depending on the circumstances we're looking for temperature changes so it's not necessarily, you know – it does tend to work better in colder temperatures or nighttime and whatnot when you're looking for a person on foot, you know, travelling and whatnot. But it does have a level of accuracy any given time, basically.

G. BUDDEN: Okay. Thank you.

I interrupted you twice there. If you can get back to your place in your narrative and continue that'd be great.

P. FRENCH: No, I need to be interrupted sometimes, that's for sure.

So if could go to page 17, I believe, in this exhibit. I apologize for rambling on; I hope it's in order.

G. BUDDEN: It's very helpful.

P. FRENCH: So what we see here is, again, this is our radio tracking. So this is a combination of tracks for day – for November 7 and November 8. This is the total area that was searched, or which was tracked. So, again, if our radio goes beyond a line of sight where it can't actually reach the command post or the repeater, we actually can't lay a track for it. So that red circle is the 300-metre perimeter, the green circle is the 500-metre perimeter and the blue circle is an 800-metre perimeter around place last seen, so that's the residence where he had left. So that's all the areas that we can cover on the 7th and 8th.

Also, if we go to the next page down, which is page 18, that's the helicopter track that was completed that day. Now, again, we couldn't show everything that we had done for the

helicopter, just – it was too big of an area. But you can see in detail that the helicopter covered much of the area in the CBS – community of CBS.

I forgot to reference these in completing the search for November 8, so I wanted to go back to those. But with regards to the 11th, again, we went up; we had a smaller showing there with the drone team. I believe there was probably, maybe – there were seven individuals on scene. Again, there was nothing located. We had targeted several areas in which our search managers and the RNC had identified as, you know, high-probability areas, areas that they wanted searched with the drone, particularly behind the residence and a few other wooded or boggy areas, and with no success.

So still, we're at November the 11th and we have still seen no sign, no calls from the public saying they found this individual and whatnot. So, again, we had completed our search for that day.

G. BUDDEN: Was the Rovers Search and Rescue team involved at any point after the 11th of November?

P. FRENCH: No, Sir.

G. BUDDEN: Okay. And I understand that the individual was eventually found alive. He didn't return; he was found and – but was found alive.

P. FRENCH: Yes. Mr. Doe was located. They received a call – if I remember correctly, they received a call from the public and he was located 2.8 kilometres away from where he had left. In total, we spent 536 hours volunteer time with just our own members, so just Rovers and Central Avalon, on this particular search for Mr. Doe. Throughout the four separate calls for this individual over the two-month period, our team spent 1,426 hours searching for this individual on multiple days.

And, again, it was – you know, goes back – related to we had difficulties later on in our search efforts of motivating our volunteers to come out and help with this search, you know, due to previous incidents. And in many ways, Mr. Doe, he created some challenges for us as search management as to where to go and what

to do. He kind of rewrote his own book and definitely give myself an education on maybe things to do in future and whatnot, because things where, you know, a typical despondent would do this; he was quite opposite. So there was – you know, it had its fair share of challenges for sure.

G. BUDDEN: Okay.

We obviously have more to do, Mr. Commissioner, but it's almost 10:25. Would this be a good time to take a break?

THE COMMISSIONER: Yeah, that works. Thank you very much. Maybe 10 or 15 minutes.

G. BUDDEN: Thank you.

Recess

CLERK: All rise.

This commission of inquiry is now in session.

Please be seated.

G. BUDDEN: Thank you, Mr. Commissioner.

I – Mr. French, I'm going to have some questions for you now and perhaps some other members of the team, and then other lawyers will have the opportunity to question you. So – and we are going to hear from Sergeant Didham who will comment on aspects of this search and on some of the issues it raises. So we'll – so I'll start with some questions for you, Mr. French.

Firstly, you're – we've heard about the relationship between the RCMP and various search teams, and I understand that it's the same with the RNC, the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, and the Rover Search and Rescue team. And by that, I mean my understanding is that the RNC call you guys to request your assistance in a search; you don't self-deploy?

P. FRENCH: That's correct, yep.

G. BUDDEN: So – and just for absolute clarity, if you happen to get a call at home one night and somebody is calling you saying my child or my brother or my spouse who's off hiking hasn't returned, you don't immediately call up your

team – you don't do anything of the sort, do you?

P. FRENCH: No, Sir, no. If we done that, we wouldn't be covered under any insurance policies with the government or anything, so we don't self-task at all (inaudible).

G. BUDDEN: Exactly. So you only accept tasks, to use that term, from the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary or you have areas of RCMP jurisdiction within your search area?

P. FRENCH: That's correct, yep.

G. BUDDEN: Okay. So it would either the RCMP or the RNC and, likewise, if they at any point say that we no longer require your services, thank you very much, the search ends?

P. FRENCH: Correct. Yeah, it's – I'd like to feel that – and Sergeant Didham can speak to it, too. I feel like we have a very good relationship with (inaudible) authority having jurisdiction, so with the RNC and the RCMP. You know – and they're trained to the same – I know for the RNC they're pretty much trained to the same standard as what we are. You know, they have the search managers' course, so they have an idea. It's not new and fresh to them.

They're not, you know, they're not – Sergeant Didham and her team, they're not just patrol officers coming off the street. They have an understanding of some of the concepts that search managers come up with and why they want to do that, so I feel that we're very much a team when we're working in the command post but, ultimately, the decision comes down to either the RNC incident commander or the RCMP.

G. BUDDEN: Thank you.

And then – and that leads to my next question. We hear the terms “incident commander” and “search manager.” We've heard it throughout our hearings and we're hearing it again today. I would assume the incident commander would be Officer Andrews or Sergeant Didham or another member, in this case, the RNC and the search manager might be yourself or Mr. Biddiscombe or another member of the Rovers.

P. FRENCH: Correct.

G. BUDDEN: Thank you.

The – in this particular incidence, you've talked about the drone; you've talked about the command centre. Tell us a little bit more about the command centre. What is it? What is the command centre?

P. FRENCH: Yeah, so a command centre can range from any range of places or things. It could be this room. In most of our cases, we have a mobile unit that we dedicate as a command post. Our building can be used as a command post, again, depending on the circumstances.

Our command post is set up on a – you know, it's probably a 26-foot box, enclosed box, on a newly purchased Freightliner frame. So it's a pretty robust vehicle. It's not a small – it's not a pickup truck. We – so some teams have – in the province, they have trailers and whatnot. We actually have a mobile unit much like what you have seen in Grand Falls-Windsor. I believe they had the – their command post out there. So it's much like what you've seen there.

In that command post, there are any number of resources from printed maps, mapping – or computers dedicated to mapping programs; computers dedicated to data management programs, much like what we see in this exhibit here. We have multiple radio systems in which we can talk to any other emergency response agency. I'm going to say for sure within the Avalon, but I would wager within the province. And what I mean by that is we can talk to the Coast Guard; we can talk to the air traffic control tower if need be; we can talk to St. John's Regional Fire Department. We can talk to all these agencies, you know, so there's no, you know, interruption in communication.

We also have a computer – or a screen down in the back of our command post – so our command post is kind of segregated. So we – down in the back, we have a table with some bench chairs and a screen, and that's where our incident commander and our search managers are going to be to. If we need to interview someone, we can interview them down there. If we need to debrief somebody or a team, that's

where we would bring them, down to the back, kind of away from the radios and the mapping, you know, away from all the hustle and bustle.

Our team members or our searchers who are arriving on the scene, they would talk to the individuals of the mapping or the communications section, they would check-in at the command post. So, you know, in the back of these logs, you can see when each individual showed up and when they left, you know. So we also have many different assets from previous search logs, we have our own handheld forward-looking infrared camera, we have spotting scopes, we have food, water, a range of GPS and alerting devices such as a Garmin inReach, extra flashlights, spare batteries, chargers, tools and equipment, sunscreen, fly dope.

So, I mean, it's really the, you know, it's the command post, it's the centre of attention when we're on a search. It's the one place that everybody on our team knows to go to or communicate to if there's any trouble or to seek and direction.

G. BUDDEN: Sure. And we heard in Grand Falls the evidence was that their command centre, the price tag was something approaching \$400,000 to purchase and equip it. Does that strike you as the sort of same range that you folks are talking about for yours?

H. BLACKMORE: Our command post, right now, is worth a little under \$400,000, at that time, and it was all raised completely by going out and soliciting funds – the way we do everything. Usually when we go at a purchase of that size, and the same thing like our drone, we go to the general public, put on a campaign and work it out so that we can raise the money to be able to order such a piece of equipment. But, right now, the last estimate we had done for insurance purposes was \$400,000.

G. BUDDEN: Thank you. And we'll return to some of those fundraising things later on today.

You used a number of terms there just before I asked that question and most of them we understand what they are, like fly dope, but you used the term Garmin inReach, which was a term I personally never heard in my life until about a couple of months ago.

Perhaps, for the benefit of all of us, you could explain what a Garmin inReach is and why it is so significant in the ground search and rescue world.

P. FRENCH: Certainly.

So a Garmin inReach is a communication device, basically. Well, it's a multifaceted device; mainly we use it for communication purposes. It is also a GPS, a global positioning system, so that we can upload mapping of our area and when we're out in the bush, as long as we have clear view to the sky, we can see exactly where we are and plot routes and not what.

You know, often we have like warm-up shelters and cabins and stuff so that if we've come across it in the past, we know if we have a team out in the woods and, you know, they're wet and cold, maybe they can look and find a shelter nearby, they can look on that system and they know that shelter is nearby so they can go there if need be.

The main reason we use the Garmin inReach is for its communication and tracking purposes. You can appreciate being in our province that cell service is sometimes, you know, taken for granted and even because of our landscape, radio communication has its difficulties at times for sure.

In our area, the East Coast Trail that surrounds our perimeters, the Northeast Avalon here, is, you know, one of the majority of our call holders. We spend an awful lot of time on to it and it's important that a search team can remain in communication with the command centre so that we know they're okay. If they have information that can change the function of a search, they can relay that information back to us and whatnot.

These Garmin inReaches are programmed so that – and it can change, but for the most part they are programmed so that every 30 minutes we will – the command post – will receive a dump basically of information of tracks. So it lays a pin drop on a map every minute and every 30 minutes it would dump those, it would send those to the command post so that at any time we can see where our teams are and where they have been.

They can send us a text message, an email. We can send them a message as well and they would be notified through the inReach. It's just a handheld device. It's not much different than a cellphone really and, yeah, so they're most effective because we can keep track of a particular team and because of our difficulties with communications on searches and whatnot, they're really, really a great asset in being able to communicate back and forth with our teams.

G. BUDDEN: Sure and this is – Garmin, of course, is a brand name and inReach Satellite Communication is the device and this would be one, I guess, of – one example, there no doubt are others on the market from other suppliers, but this is the one this particular search team uses.

P. FRENCH: Correct, yup.

G. BUDDEN: So just to follow up on that before I return to some other questions.

It goes without saying that a search – if there's 20 people on the search that's not 20 people out there sort of following their own intuition, or whim or anything, it's very much a planned operation, an exercise. You'd obviously agree with me there.

P. FRENCH: Absolutely, 100 per cent, yeah.

G. BUDDEN: Yes, and I assume with the Garmin inReach and other resources that you're able to say, almost at any moment, where all the individuals who are a part of this search are, or at least their teams are.

P. FRENCH: Correct, yeah.

G. BUDDEN: And they would – their training would tell them to stick with their teams, to communicate with their team leaders and so forth.

P. FRENCH: Yeah, we don't – if you're going to deviate from a plan, the command post would be notified of that and okay that. So it's important that everybody sticks to the task and that we remain in communication or be able to track them at all times.

G. BUDDEN: Okay.

Some of the – well, I'll return, again, to this specific search for Mr. Doe. You used the term at one point, you described him as despondent or as a despondent, and as I understand that term – it may not be the term – I understand it is not term that the mental health community would currently use, but it is, I understand, a term that the search and rescue community, to your understanding, uses to describe a certain type of search subject. Would that be correct?

P. FRENCH: Correct, yeah. It may not be the proper terminology that that area of health care would understand, but for any search and rescue member, I would say, definitely in the country and probably across the world, would understand and recognize the term despondent as an individual who had left on their own will, so they seek to get away and could or could not be suicidal or looking to harm themselves. So that is a classification as – for a despondent for us. It comes from our search manuals, right from searcher, right up to search manager and also reference in the *Lost Person Behavior* book.

G. BUDDEN: Okay.

And later in the policy, we will hear from Ms. Bradley about some aspects of mental health and search and rescue, so we'll be returning to that. But for present purposes this – so your understanding is this was a search for an individual who did not – when at the moment he left his home, he left of his volition and was not seeking to be found, at least not initially.

P. FRENCH: Correct. And that's the same for every one of these searches, is that this individual left under his own will because he didn't want to be there. He didn't necessarily want to harm himself; he just didn't want to be where he was and wanted to be home, basically.

G. BUDDEN: Yes, and we'll get to the frustration in a minute, but the decision to search for a person is a decision that the police agency, the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary in this case, based on information available to them and a legal analysis perhaps and so forth determine that it is necessary to search for a person. And then they engage the search and rescue volunteers to do that search. It's not your determination whether this is an appropriate search or not, I take it?

P. FRENCH: Correct, yeah. That direction comes from the police of jurisdiction.

G. BUDDEN: So you were tasked with the search on the assumption that it was a necessary and proper search and you didn't have any reason to – nor would you ever look beyond that to question the motives of the search or any such thing?

P. FRENCH: Correct, yeah.

G. BUDDEN: Okay.

The frustration, I understand, from talking with you, was not a frustration with Mr. Doe himself; it was, I understand, more a frustration that was felt that perhaps more needed to be done to address the underlying issues in his life that were causing him to act in this fashion. Am I correct on that?

P. FRENCH: Yes, and thank you for bringing that up because I know I did refer to it, you know, in my briefing there, but you're 100 per cent right. It wasn't toward the subject; it wasn't towards Mr. Doe, that frustration that, you know, may have come from our searchers and whatnot. It was that, you know, here we are – I mean, we can all understand we're looking for an individual for the fourth time, you know, eight consecutive – well, not eight consecutive days but eight days in total, and we recognize that we are looking for a person who is hiding from us. So we're kind of – we're going against the grain and so, you know, with that comes some frustrations.

Thankfully, there was preventative measures put in place every time we completed a search, so it wasn't like, you know, Mr. Doe went on to, you know, the same as normal. There were steps taken – you know, I know the RNC had discussions with the homes and whatnot as to what they can do. What happened within the home, I'm not sure, but I know there was steps taken each time to prevent this from happening in future.

G. BUDDEN: And frustrated or not, 24 volunteers showed up on the first day of the search and I believe 35 showed up on the second day.

P. FRENCH: Yes, Sir, yeah.

G. BUDDEN: So – and the search wasn't stood down because you guys didn't show up; it was a decision that was made in conjunction with the RNC that other resources, other methods might be more appropriate in the unique circumstances of this case.

P. FRENCH: Correct.

G. BUDDEN: Okay.

And I understand as well from talking to Mr. Blackmore over the last number of weeks, from other search and rescue teams and from your evidence today that a number of your tasked, perhaps even the majority of your tasked searches involve individuals who, similarly to this individual, may have not become lost while engaged in another activity such as berry picking, but left their homes and were not necessarily looking to be found; that they were, as the term you used, would fall into the search and rescue category of – quote, unquote – despondent.

P. FRENCH: Yes. I would say that – you know, it's just a general average; I would say probably 60 per cent of the searches we do in our area for our own team may not necessarily be despondent, but in regards to individuals with some sort of mental illness. So it mightn't necessarily be a despondent, although that is, you know, a higher percentage within that 60 per cent, but it could be any other range of mental illness as well.

G. BUDDEN: Thank you.

And would also, I presume, include individuals perhaps with some form of dementia where they were – had become lost and needed to be found but might also present challenges in finding them.

P. FRENCH: Yes, Sir, yeah.

G. BUDDEN: And the materials that I read in preparation for this hearing, there was a lot of very detailed information in there, perhaps about finding individuals with not just mental health challenges, but all kind of challenges. So when you talk about lost-person behaviour, that is –

perhaps you could tell us a little bit. This might be a good time to talk about how – perhaps how detailed that is, how – what guidance is – there is to be found from the materials that you folks are trained in regarding lost-person behaviour.

P. FRENCH: Certainly.

So the lost-person behaviour book is certainly referenced by all of our search managers. It's a book that I haven't memorized yet, but I'm getting quite frequent in certain areas. So it gives some general information on types of searches, previous cases and whatnot. But it also – and what we focus a lot on when we're referencing the material is that it categorizes different search parameters for, say, hikers or children under five years old or individuals with dementia or despondent patients. And it would categorize each one of them separately.

So it would define what that group is. So if it's referring to a despondent, it would define what a despondent is. It would define or it would classify what those individuals – why would they be despondent, things that lead up to their disappearance. And I'll keep referring to a despondent just for this purposes, but it would also give indication in miles and kilometres as to the statistical area where other individuals, who have been located, so actual cases, across – I don't know if it's global or whatnot, where the statistics come from. I know it's mainly from the US. I know Mr. Smith can probably correct that. But it would give us an idea of – I know for a despondent it says in fair weather or in this particular environment, a despondent, 25 per cent of them stay within, I believe it's 200 metres or 230 metres of place last seen; 50 per cent are within 800 metres; 75 per cent – I can't remember the exact numbers, but it goes up to I believe 1.3 kilometres or something for 100 per cent.

So you can see that the majority – so 50 per cent of despondents, on the statistical analysis, are within 800-metre perimeter. And you can see that's why we base our grid search on 800-metre perimeters. There's also other things to take into consideration, and that's why we included hasty searches and whatnot, but you can get an understanding of why we would reference that book.

It can also give survivability rates. It also gives areas in which the individual may be to, so maybe – most individuals are found in green pastures, or most are found snuggled next to a tree. It would give all different sorts of scenarios so – and it would give you these numbers based on terrain, weather patterns and whatnot, so it's fairly detailed. It would give you common occurrences – so typical, if a despondent is to hide from other individuals. So, you know, they want to stay by themselves and they're not looking to be found. So it would define a lot of these aspects.

Now, again, this is all just a statistical analysis, so you can't take what's in that book for – you know, well, we're going to do everything that this book says because this is – but every case is different. What this book does is take a whole pile of previous searches for these types of individuals, combined all that information and statistical data into one place where we can go and reference. And, you know, the current data is a little bit dated, but I do know they were working on new data as well.

G. BUDDEN: Okay.

And a couple of follow-up questions to that, three or four, really. The first one is that the level of detail there is such that if you're looking for a six-year-old child, you would approach it differently than if you're looking for, say, a 10-year-old child.

P. FRENCH: Correct, yeah. So there's age ranges. I can't remember exactly what they are at the moment, but it would probably say from zero to five or from five to 10, different age ranges. They would be a different classification.

G. BUDDEN: And the second, you sort of were – alluded this at the end. The – if you were – there's a danger always – lawyers will refer to something called “tunnel vision” where you expect something to be a certain way and everything sort of ends up pointing you to where you thought you should be heading to begin with. How do you avoid the risk? Because we have looked at a number of searches and it's not uncommon, at least in our sample, that people might be somewhere other than where they were expected to be.

So how do you avoid the risk that – of saying well, the manual says it's not going to be more than 1.1 kilometres, so we're not going to look an inch beyond 1.1 kilometres; how do you avoid that sort of tunnel vision?

P. FRENCH: That's a very good point. And the main answer to that question is that search managers have to – when they're developing their search areas or establishing them, they have to take information from a theoretical sense, a statistical sense, a subjective sense and a deductive, so my personal feelings and whatnot.

So the statistical sense – and is what I refer to as lost-person behaviour – that's really the most statistical value, what we use for it; that's just one piece of the puzzle. And yes, you know, I mean, you know, sometime you have your own intuition on where an individual can be, but our training ensures that we're taking in multiple accounts of where an individual can be and following the evidence.

And you can say that – we can say that we looked for Mr. Doe three previous times; that doesn't mean that he done the same thing three times. Every search I've ever done is always different. You learn from every one of them and you're taking all that into account, too. So it's – it can be easy to go down a rabbit hole, but getting back to the training and ensuring you're taking in all parts of the process ensures that you're going to cover that area to the best of your ability.

G. BUDDEN: Okay.

The – one thing that has emerged from our close study of searches is just how much time is of the essence, that individuals lost are at risk. They're at risk from many sources: from nature, from really any number of things. So on the one hand, you're trying to find people and find them now; on the other hand, you're trying to be comprehensive and, rather than everything be a hasty search, try to impose some rigour and discipline on the search. Is that always – is that a challenge, the sort of balancing the need for haste with the need for method?

P. FRENCH: For sure, yeah. So – and, I mean, this particular case we used hasty and grid searching through a series of line searching in a

particular area, and we focused on the probability of detection of where this individual would be.

We also have to take into account rivers, roadways, trail systems. So it's not just a, you know, a circle on a map. When we're planning a search area, you know, in this one we gridded it out and whatnot, but in other cases we would often – you know, I would have a series of different markings and circles within that circle, so I would say, well, you know, depending on statistical values, environment and whatnot, maybe this individual went downhill, so I would focus more on the areas downhill first and away from the rivers, or if someone was attracted by water, we would go to those areas first.

So, you know, you have to take all these things into account, plot them out on a map, discuss them with your incident commander and your fellow search managers and you have to rely on the information back from your search teams. We make an initial plan and the search teams are out completing those search areas, but I'm relying on the information that's coming back from them. So if they're saying – if they're in a trock of woods and we're looking for a missing hunter and it's so thick, you know, that a moose wouldn't walk through there, I'm getting that information back; we're going to change and – so – and that's the way the search evolves.

It's the continuous circle that keeps turning, you know. You're making a plan; you're setting objectives and you're taking – you're acting on those objectives and then you're taking information back from your searchers. So the wheel keeps turning and, as you get more information, you shift and you turn and you move your resources accordingly.

G. BUDDEN: Thank you.

When we were in Grand Falls, one of the members on the search team panel – a panel just as you guys are today – the individual who's responsible for training of the team spoke about his recognition that many of their searches were searches for individuals who had mental health challenges and he recognized the importance of – I believe the term used was “mental health first aid” and his desire to have his team become trained specifically in that field.

I'm going to ask you, I guess, what training that your team has and what training you believe might be – additional training might be helpful for dealing with individuals that – and, again, I'll use the search and rescue term, realizing that it's a problematic term. That the term searching for an individual who may be "despondent," as search and rescue defines the term. I guess what – you would acknowledge that can be different than the training of looking for somebody who may have gone berry picking, has become lost and desperately wishes to be found. It's clear there are different aspects of the search and I'm – I guess my question is about your training.

P. FRENCH: Yeah, so there are many different aspects. I would definitely agree that mental health first aid training in – and with regards to training for us, how to approach and handle individuals with mental health. So the mental health first aid, I know sometimes it's – is it for the individual we're looking for; is it for our searchers? I think what we're referring to here is for training for the searchers to be able to deal with and interact with an individual with mental health –

G. BUDDEN: That's what I meant.

P. FRENCH: Yeah. So I would definitely agree with that. I would really much like to see that incorporated into our training.

And we do talk about these things. So not every training – we're constantly training. I started this I don't know how many years ago and I never stopped learning. And that's how we've set up our team and that's how I know the association is set up, is that we're always training. And that doesn't mean that we're necessarily getting a certificate to say that we're trained in a certain aspect, but typically, you know, in our own crew I know every month we'll have a business meeting and then every month we'll have a training meeting. So on opposites, one would be every two weeks, so once a month we'll have that business meeting where we'll discuss business items and then we'll actually have a training meeting. So that's on top of our speciality team trainings and whatnot.

So lots of times we'll bring in individuals from the mental health associations to talk to us about individuals with dementia. We've had these

conversations and we look at that as training, it's a better understanding for us so that we know, as searchers and team leaders and search managers, to be able to – how to handle these situations.

We've had presentations from the Autism Society. I know there's a new – or a new program out there now called SAR autism who are teaching first responders how to deal with individuals who are autistic, specific to search and other emergency responders.

With that, you know, with regards to the mental health first aid training, typically that comes with a cost and you know we don't have much of a budget when it comes to training and we have other aspects that we have to focus on as well, so that has to be taken into account. But with regards to those having an individual from a certain organization or whatnot come in and speak to us about Alzheimer's or dementia and whatnot, typically they do this free of charge. They're happy enough to do it and we're happy to have them come and learn from that. So that's something quite typical of, I know not just our team but many teams within the association and – yeah.

G. BUDDEN: Thank you.

We're dividing today really up into two sections. The first will be focused on this search and related issues, and I know there's always some spillover, and then we'll talk later about broader issues, funding, fundraising, recruitment and things like that. So I'm not going to ask you those questions now. We'll get back to that.

So I've nothing further for you Mr. French, but I would like to go to the other team members and ask them and also Ms. Didham, and ask them to comment on this search and the issues surrounding this search that we've addressed. Again, I really stress the importance of using the pseudonym Doe rather than the true name of the subject of this specific search.

Mr. Hickey first I guess is the closest –

THE COMMISSIONER: If I could interrupt.

Would you like to invite counsel to see if they would like to ask questions of this witness, given that he's been on the stand for quite a

while and he's focused on some of the elements of the search? Just make sure that this is – now or later is a better time for counsel.

G. BUDDEN: What I thought we might do, Mr. Commissioner, and perhaps I should distinguish Sergeant Didham, but the other three searchers I would regard as supplementing the evidence of this searcher. So perhaps we can hear from those three at least before we turn to counsel and then counsel can have the benefit of questioning all of them having first heard from them.

THE COMMISSIONER: All right.

How do you feel about that Mr. Williams, Mr. Ralph?

T. WILLIAMS: That's fine.

P. RALPH: That's fine, Mr. Commissioner.

G. BUDDEN: Okay, thank you.

So Mr. Hickey, if you have anything to add – you may not but if you have anything to add to what Mr. French has said about this particular search or searches or about the subject of searching for an person who – with these challenge – may not wish to be found. Again, stressing the need for anonymity, I ask you to speak. And you can take your mask off as well.

J. HICKEY: Thank you.

Just on this particular search, I think because we're in the urban setting I think it created a different challenge for me, as a searcher, from the point of view, when I go out on a trail looking for a lost person, I kind of know where you're going, what you're looking for. But once we move into the urban areas, command assigns us a boundary line and we take our team, we run that boundary line. But within our boundary lines, because we're in an urban area we have all these homes, cars, trailers, sheds and it's all on private property. And there is a fine line there when we are searching for somebody who is hiding on us, on where we can go and what we – how far we can go. Like we really shouldn't be in on property but I really want to get a look behind that shed or underneath that boat and a lot of times, like Paul said earlier, that's what you'll find is that they are hiding away from us

and they're like a moving target, they're moving along with us. So in the urban area, I find it a bit of a challenge that way with the teams, not so much when we move out, say, to the East Coast Trail or whether we're doing a different type of search. That's just my challenge anyway.

G. BUDDEN: Okay. Thank you. That was helpful.

Ms. O'Brien?

M. O'BRIEN: I think Paul spoke to the specific number of volunteers that attended over the course of the four days, I was just wondering if you could repeat those numbers for the purpose of what I am about to say.

G. BUDDEN: It was 24 and 35.

M. O'BRIEN: And the number of hours spent?

G. BUDDEN: Five hundred – oh, sorry.

P. FRENCH: Five hundred and thirty for the fourth search and 1,400.

M. O'BRIEN: So in speaking to those numbers and the turnout of people there, I just, you know, want to remind the room that this is a professional volunteer organization. Most of the members showing up to help look for other people's families, they hold full-time jobs; they might be in school; they have families. And on top of searching, we also train; we hold meetings; we provide public education, outreach and prevention. We have to fundraise for things like our command post and our drones. So it's not just a number; it's people's time that they're putting in to helping out and spending, you know, on a – four times on a search.

G. BUDDEN: We'll be returning to some of those. We have really good evidence at the other – the other round tables, people talked about the hundreds of hours they commit on annual basis, individuals, and the thousands or ten of thousands of hours they commit as a team. And so we'll certainly be going – diving into that a bit deeper in a few minutes, or hour two.

Thank you.

Mr. Day.

M. DAY: Yes.

So I had been a searcher on both those two days in question for our despondent, Mr. Doe. So I guess to add to what Jack was saying there and what Mr. French was saying was – we did call this a urban search, but if anybody is familiar with the geography, more particular in CBS area where it happened than, say, St. John's, so we started out – if you take one of the grids more particular on the north there, you were starting out in a residential subdivision and the further north you got towards the Trans-Canada Highway, it was turning into – it was going farmland to bog to deep woods, so it was quite a unique area to take in.

And, you know, we had 35 people on the second day and 24 the first day, or whatever it may – whatever the exact numbers was, it's not – it's irrelevant. But I took a team of six with me and we went – we took one of the more northerly grids in this and it took us about three hours to get through it. So it's quite impressive what we were able to cover off. And, like, you know, if you're starting off, sneakers was – sneakers and jeans is an acceptable method for getting around; next thing you know, you wants hip waders on because you're in the bog up to your – you're up to your knees and then you're in thick, thick woods, right?

So, you know, I mean, I've been in the organization for pretty well two decades now and, you know, I get a lot of respect from the command post. If I call up Paul or whatever and say: Paul, b'y, you know, this man hasn't got through here. It's impossible for us to get through here. And then, you know, my opinion is certainly valued by the command post and we work together as a team. So they got a job to do in there and we got a job to do out here, so it's quite important just to understand you know.

And another thing, in this particular case, is, you know, we have a great radio system; don't get me wrong. As you can see, it covers a lot. But there's a lot of gaps in it because it's only good for so far or if you got to certain (inaudible) line of sight and the repeaters, they got to be able to ping. So then, it comes a point then where we're using our own cellphones to get some communication. And, you know, we don't mind that for the most part, but sometimes it comes a

question of liability when it comes to a more sensitive type work we might be doing is the information – if I'm sending a text message with a picture, is my cellphone then could technically become evidence in something if it was a little more sensitive.

So we are using our personal equipment. And then, you know, some places in CBS, even it gets to a point where the cell coverage doesn't work, so you're into the point then where the cellphone doesn't work, our radios aren't working, so now we're relying on the inReaches, right? So it comes back to how important that inReach – I know – I kind of wanted to reiterate that. To me, as a searcher, to me, that tool is so important, I invested in my own piece of equipment and I pay the monthly fee myself. Because besides what my use, for personal use, I feel a lot more comfort just knowing that at least – at the very least on a search, I got my own tool that I can take with me. It's kept in my front pocket at all times; it's out in my truck there now.

There's always a circumstance when it's an important tool. And I think, you know, that – I know you said this will be talked about again later today, but I just want to reiterate that. I believe – I can't remember exactly; it would be in our logs if we used inReaches on that particular search, but I would say most likely there was a couple teams that did have an inReach with them and it was an important tool. So I think –

G. BUDDEN: And just, for anybody who doesn't know this, the inReach is a satellite – it's a satellite form of communication so you don't have the issues of moving in and out of range like you would with a cellphone. Okay, and you're agreeing? Yeah.

Mr. Commissioner – and perhaps counsel might wish to contribute to this – I have nothing further for the search team at this aspect of today's evidence. I'm not sure if they want to hear from Sergeant Didham first before questioning or after. It's an integrated search, so I can see advantages of that but – to hearing from her first, but if counsel wish to go otherwise, I don't have a preference.

P. RALPH: Thank you, Commissioner. I can go now, if that's fine.

G. BUDDEN: Okay, sure. And, as we said earlier, Mr. Ralph, the lawyer for the government, now will ask you questions.

P. RALPH: Thanks again, that was very comprehensive. It was very helpful in understanding this search. I've a few questions and I guess the first is about the command post. I'd like to get a sense of how that's working, generally, but I guess, in particular, this search. Who would be in the command post and how is it operated?

P. FRENCH: Certainly.

So in the command post, typically, either it could be anywhere from three to six individuals stationed in that or around the command post at any given time. There's a search manager and, as referenced earlier, typically, if we can, we like to have two search managers. There's an incident commander, there's a communications person and – who's looking after radio communication and data management, so in our EMwerx system and there's also a mapping individual there who looks after prepping the radios, assigning them so that, you know, they can track properly on a map and we can go back and look at that later.

So those are the main positions, but then you'll have other people who are – may be outside or nearby who are on general logistics, so if we need fuel topped up for generators or whatnot, then, you know – or if we need to get a search team from one area to another, they'll take a pickup and do that.

So does that give you –

P. RALPH: Right.

P. FRENCH: – a good sense?

P. RALPH: Yeah.

So in terms of information gathering and, sort of, recording of information, would that be that communication person? They're recording the data that's coming back to you from the searchers and, I guess, also the police officers.

P. FRENCH: Correct. So the communications person who's running EMwerx system is recording all the conversations in and out of the command post. They mightn't be word for word, but some of them are generalized, some of them are word for word, depending on how active the scene is at any given time.

So there are two radio stations at our command post. So there's one in the front of the command post where the radio communicator would sit and there's a second one at the back of the command post where the incident commander and search manager would sit. And the reason that is is because if a team needs to take direction or if there needs to be a discussion between a team member and – or a team leader and a search manager, they can have that discussion.

For the most part, we try to let the communications run through the communications officer who's at the front, but – you know, so the search management team is still hearing all of this, they have their own radio down in the back of the command post, so there's no interference there, we're hearing everything that's coming on and the communication person is logging it, so ...

P. RALPH: Right.

So, in terms of recording this information, is it all done directly – I think the EMwerx application, is that how you pronounce that?

P. FRENCH: EMwerx, yeah.

P. RALPH: And so is the person that's recording the information are they sort of directly typing on a keyboard and putting information directly in the application?

P. FRENCH: Sorry.

Ideally, yes. That's doesn't always happen. Granted, we can get on a search scene and before someone got a computer set up, I mean, we could be, you know, discussing things, or tasking or things coming over the radio. So typically, what you'll see is a pen and paper, old fashion, next to the system and they're jotting notes.

You know, I don't know if I mentioned it or not, but the beginning of the search is very busy. The command post is a busy spot; we're trying to gather all our thoughts. The search management team is trying to do their investigation and establish a search area and whatnot, and the searchers are prepping themselves. They're getting their GPSes. They're getting their radios. They're getting their water and whatnot. So they're prepping their selves and we're prepping ourselves and – so it is a very busy time and typically, more often than not, I will say, that you start off by handwriting notes and then you would transcribe them –

P. RALPH: Right, fair enough.

P. FRENCH: – into the system. As soon as everything kind of dies down, you'd get a chance to plug them in.

P. RALPH: Right. And so is most of that information eventually, sort of, put into the EMwerx system?

P. FRENCH: Yes –

P. RALPH: Yeah, go ahead, sorry.

P. FRENCH: Sorry. So yes, once – so once there's a kind of lull in the – and we have a break, the communicator would then – we can backdate – you can't change a log once it's inputted. So on this ICS form in the Communications Log that you see there, nothing can be changed; I can't take anything out of that. Once it is in the system, it is in the system and it is done that way for a reason. I can backdate things so – and it tracks – it logs who put in – so if Melanie was a communicator on a search and after I went back and changed something, it would identify who made what note.

P. RALPH: Right.

So if that was done in this search, we'd – you'd be able to see it?

P. FRENCH: You'd be able to see, yeah, the difference in names.

But my point that I was trying to make is that if Melanie is on the communications officer, she would be handwriting notes. Typically, before

the end of the search, she would have enough breaks in between to input all of her (inaudible) –

P. RALPH: Right, fair enough.

P. FRENCH: So by the time we get to the end of the search, she wouldn't have to input –

P. RALPH: Right.

P. FRENCH: – a pile.

P. RALPH: So Exhibit 074 is up there now, so is that – this document produced by the EMwerx application?

P. FRENCH: Correct. So if we – if you would like to go to page 1, I guess, for better context of Exhibit 074. What this is – a compilation of all the information we're putting in the system. So we don't see it exactly like this on our computer; it's run on a totally different system. But it takes all the information that we've put into the system and it puts it into – I believe there's probably 15 different reports we can run.

So it is depending on if you want a Communications Log – this particular one that is on the screen here is an Incident Summary Report, so it would give you very general information: what sort of assets we had, number of members, how long they were on the scene, search manager, incident commander, our tasking – so what was the request from the responding agency – those sorts of things.

If we scroll down to page 4, what we see here is a Communications Log. So you can see that every – you know, as things are happening, the communications person – so it's not just transcribing information that's going back and forth to radio; it's also discussions that's happening between the search manager and incident commander; it's an individual coming to the command post and saying: I've seen this or I've seen that. It's incidents that are happening. So the helicopter landed; that wasn't communicated over the radio, but it's transcribed in here.

P. RALPH: An ICS, would that be Incident Command System? Is that –

P. FRENCH: Yes.

P. RALPH: – the abbreviation?

P. FRENCH: Yes, that's – so that's a – basically, a – it's not a standard, but it's a system in which – incident command systems, they have a series of forms and logs and whatnot to do with any emergency management scene. So it doesn't necessarily have to be a search and rescue mission; it could be a – you know, it could be any series of things –

P. RALPH: Right.

P. FRENCH: – that –

P. RALPH: Any type of emergency.

P. FRENCH: Correct. But – so, you know, and there are certain forms within our search and rescue work that we would fill out as part of our search, and it would automatically input the information into those forms and we can print them off so that we're not handwriting all these forms.

P. RALPH: Right.

P. FRENCH: It's done digitally.

P. RALPH: So as you're entering data in the EMwerx application, that automatically would go to the ICS?

P. FRENCH: Correct, yeah.

P. RALPH: So if we keep going down then, so you have the maps. I'm just wondering how those maps are generated.

P. FRENCH: So those – all these maps are generated on different platforms. So if we go – page 11, perfect. This here is a map that I had our mapping officer print off. I took it down and back to the command post and I scribbled on it. This is – and there's – yeah, there's –

P. RALPH: And that's –

P. FRENCH: – multiple on there, but – so this is something I printed off that I use as part of my search management, but because it was important and an integral piece of the search, I

take that after the fact; when we go back that night, the next day or whatever, I'll scan that, copy it and add it as an attachment to the search. So our – the EMwerx system allows you to input any attachment. So there's times that we will be dealing with the JRCC, the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre, if they develop a drift report for an individual who may have gone over a cliff or whatnot, we'll input – we'll take that and save it with our – as an attachment on our EMwerx report –

P. RALPH: Right.

P. FRENCH: – for that search.

P. RALPH: Right.

I can't recall exactly how far this gentleman was found from his last known position. Did you say it was like 3.6 kilometres, is that –?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: 2.8.

P. RALPH: 2.8, I'm sorry.

P. FRENCH: I believe it was 2.8.

P. RALPH: 2.8, sorry.

And do you know if that was – where he was found was an area that was searched during those two days or three day, I guess, that you were searching?

P. FRENCH: So, yes, in general. It wasn't within the 800-metre perimeter but it was areas that were searched. I can't – I wasn't there exactly so I don't know exactly where he was found. I just know that it was in a residential area and that that area had been searched by road, by RNC officers and by searchers in their own vehicles.

G. BUDDEN: Sergeant Didham will have evidence on that. She may wish to speak –

P. RALPH: Sure, jump in, absolutely.

K. DIDHAM: So reading from a continuation report, which you have –

G. BUDDEN: Just again stressing the anonymity required.

K. DIDHAM: Absolutely.

One of our street patrol officers, Constable Philpott, he responded to a call of unknown trouble on November 12 at 8:20 a.m. The unknown trouble call was at 12 Marvel Place, which was in CBS. The person who called the police reported that there was a man in the wooded area behind the garage lying in a ball and not moving and believed it to be the person that we had been looking for.

When we arrived on scene, within 10 minutes, it was confirmed that it was Mr. John Doe. At that time, he was very cold, weak and had some minor scratches on his hands but was in otherwise good condition. At that particular point in time, the officer spoke with the person who called and said that they had a dog and a dog was constantly fixated on that particular area of the property and that's what alerted them to go out and look, to see why the dog was barking. Then the ambulance and paramedics arrived to attend to Mr. Doe.

So it was on the 12th that he was located and I believe it was 2.5 to 2.8 kilometres from the area of which he had left. I don't think, based on what I've read, that it was an area that would have been covered on foot, but certainly would have been flown over via helicopter and potentially via media release asking people to look. That does not imply that he was there the whole time.

P. RALPH: Yeah.

P. FRENCH: Thank you. Paul French.

I just wanted to include that Sergeant Didham is correct; it wasn't part of the grid search. It was part of the hasty search by the road teams, by the RNC and the Rovers. It was included in the helicopter search. And for context, I would say that from where he was – so that 2.8 kilometres of where he was located, we actually completed road searches and with the helicopter three times that distance; so it was well within our area, it just wasn't within our grid search area.

P. RALPH: Subsequently, did you find out if he had been on the move? Had he been moving around? Does anyone know the answer to that?

K. DIDHAM: Sergeant Didham here.

That's not something that he relayed to us. I can share that he had indicated that he did not want to be found. He knew on occasions – on previous searches that he was looking for us. So we have – I have reason to believe based on these four searches that he was moving around but was able to avoid detection while doing so.

P. RALPH: Right.

I guess this is – I don't know if you would consider this – is this sort of defined as an urban area in terms of – how would you – it's kind of a mixed situation.

P. FRENCH: Yeah, I would define it as a semi-urban. It certainly has urban aspects, especially in the particular location we were set up. It was right on the corner of what seems to be a major thoroughfare in that area. But, I mean, there were still lots of agricultural land, forested, you know, what we would consider green areas.

P. RALPH: Yes.

P. FRENCH: So not just residential areas. You know, any time we search a residence we either have RNC officers or team members would make contact with the individual in the household before we searched there.

P. RALPH: That was my next question, actually.

P. FRENCH: Okay.

P. RALPH: How do you do the line searches and the grid search on private property?

P. FRENCH: Yeah. They would do the areas outside and then they would, basically, go door-to-door checking on different areas and whatnot. And, you know, if we're behind a fence or something we can look in areas. So there's ways we can go about it but – and it's specific – it's not specific to this search, but in specific-to-evidence searches, we can't go on an individual's property. It's not our protocol to do that, unless we're given permission, because it wouldn't be admissible if we hadn't followed the proper protocols, basically.

P. RALPH: Right.

So I just want to move to the helicopter search. And so you spoke directly with the pilot or was that someone else would've had that conversation?

P. FRENCH: I did speak with the pilot. I did not personally request a helicopter. We – it was a discussion between the search management team. Initially, just the weather wasn't cooperative, so we waited I think it was probably a couple hours; it cleared off. Constable Andrews requested the helicopter through FES.

And when the pilot arrived on scene, we communicated him via radio from helicopter to command post. We kind of designated a landing zone for that pilot before they arrive on scene, so they would communicate with someone. FES would provide them with a contact from someone from the scene and we would provide them with a landing zone prior to they got there. And typically, when they get in the general area, they would call us on the radio and ask – you know, if we had to shut down a parking lot or something like that, we would do that before they landed.

As I mentioned earlier, sometimes – like, if it's very time-sensitive, we would brief a pilot either over the radio or we would brief a crew, send them – that crew to the helicopter and then that – someone in that crew in the helicopter would brief the pilot. In this particular case it wasn't of that urgency, so we shut down the helicopter; the pilot came in the command post. Both myself and Constable Andrews briefed the pilot and discussed tactics, basically.

P. RALPH: Right. So it's –

G. BUDDEN: Just – if I may jump in. He used the term "FES." For people who haven't been part of this for a couple of weeks, it might be good just to define what that term is so it will lead to the future evidence of Mr. Rumbolt.

P. RALPH: Yeah.

P. FRENCH: So when I refer to FES, it's Fire and Emergency Services. I know sometimes it's referred to as FES-NL, Fire and Emergency Services Newfoundland and Labrador. And I

know now that they're under a new name and I don't –

P. RALPH: Emergency Services Division, fair enough.

P. FRENCH: Yeah, so ...

P. RALPH: It's changed a few times.

P. FRENCH: Yeah.

P. RALPH: EMO, FES-NL. Now it's Emergency Services Division.

P. FRENCH: Yeah.

P. RALPH: So I guess – helicopter search – and, again, I don't know anything about this, but it would seem to me it would be different in that kind of an area than it would be on the East Coast Trail. I mean, obviously, there's a lot of objects; there's a lot of people moving around. How do you kind of instruct the pilot and, I guess, the spotters as well how they should be conducting that search?

P. FRENCH: Yeah, so they're made aware of the particulars of the subject, what the subject is wearing, height, weight, classification, you know, so they – and, in this case, an image. We like to always try to use an image if we can get one. So, you know, they're – they understand what they're looking for or who they're looking for so they can distinguish them between other targets that they may see for sure. And this is not someone who has gone on the East Coast Trail so we just got to follow the trail until we find them; it's not this case.

In this particular case, we started off by having that helicopter do grids over the place last seen – a much larger grid. It was probably a kilometre to a kilometre and a half just because, you know, it takes into effect the mechanics of the helicopter. It's easier for him to do bigger grids and whatnot. So they would determine – the pilot would determine how best to do that. The spotters in the back would determine how effective they covered an area.

So oftentimes, if a searcher is in the helicopter and say, well, can I get a bit higher, can I get a bit lower, the pilot would set the speed and

height. They know what they need to do and, obviously, with their regulations with Transport Canada and whatnot. But oftentimes, there's a continuous flow of communication between the pilot and the crew that's in the aircraft.

And, you know, sometimes we'll ask for things that the pilot can't deliver, and that's fine. We work on – we do what we can do and that's it, but, you know, typically if they see a subject, oftentimes – you know, I'm not sure if we did or how many times it happened, but oftentimes we'll get the helicopter, you know, to see areas that the individual may have been, or they have reason to believe that the individual is there, or they spot an individual that could be the subject that we're looking for, and then we will follow that up with a ground team, if the helicopter wasn't able to confirm or deny.

So that's – it's very much a partnership back and forth; communication is key.

P. RALPH: Any sense of what height the helicopter – go ahead.

H. BLACKMORE: Harry Blackmore.

Also, the reason we like the helicopter for that area, especially: It's a nice, slow machine. It can come down very low because when they're flying if they're going up the trail, wooded areas off to the side, they can see in through fairly easy. That's the reason we don't request a plane up that way because you take a plane coming up the Conception Bay on that trail system, they'd never be able to pick out a person because there's that many people there.

So, as Paul said, with the description of what we're looking for and where the helicopters are up and down a bit, they can see exactly what we're looking for and pick it out; as to where if you were in, as we used before, the PAL airplane or CASARA or anybody else, it would be too fast and too high. You just can't pick it out.

P. RALPH: Right.

H. BLACKMORE: So that's the reason we ask for a helicopter in particular for this type stuff.

P. RALPH: Right.

So in terms of the spotters, I mean, how do you determine who goes up in the helicopter? Are there some of your members trained in spotting and others not?

P. FRENCH: Yeah, so we have a – yes, there are a general number of individuals who would be classified as a spotter on the team. We don't have, like, a particular CASARA spotter training or whatnot. It comes with their level of experience with search and rescue over the years. There are incidents where they've been on – within the helicopter and whatnot. So more so seasoned members and depending – it could be younger members depending on their previous training, and whatnot, coming into search and rescue because we all come from a different walk of life.

But the individuals who went up on this particular day, this is not their first time in a helicopter, it's not their first time playing a spotter role; definitely hasn't been their last. So they are trained to understand how to scan different areas, how to work with the pilot and how to define what a target is and to call it out to the pilot and, you know, to give areas. So if you have a target at 12 o'clock or, you know, the pilot needs to come around to their starboard side, or whatnot, it's – they are fluent in that training, communication and understanding.

P. RALPH: Because I understand that, I guess, CASARA spotters perhaps have more intensive training than the individuals that are working with the ground search and rescue, with the Rovers and others across the province. Is that your understanding?

P. FRENCH: Yeah, you know, I feel like I have an understanding of what their training is. I haven't been a part of it so I'm not a 100 per cent, but –

P. RALPH: Right.

P. FRENCH: – I would wager that they probably have – they probably do more of it. What we do is probably similar and equally effective.

P. RALPH: So have you ever given any consideration to calling CASARA to ask for their spotters to participate?

P. FRENCH: Yeah, for sure. It was a discussion of topic on this particular search. Actually, Constable Andrews and I discussed having CASARA. Actually, it's funny because Harry just alluded to it. But we did have a pretty open discussion – sorry, and Mr. Biddiscombe – whether we could task CASARA to the search. So the discussion was on the second day and because it was so – such a semi-urban environment, we felt that it was – the helicopter was more effective.

As Harry said, the – you know, a plane – you know, a helicopter is usually flying anywhere between 500 and a thousand feet. You know, a plane is flying much higher than that at a much faster rate. It can't just stop and hover over a certain area and say: Oh, let's have a look at that. So we found that the helicopter was more effective and for that reason, we didn't task CASARA on this search.

P. RALPH: Right.

P. FRENCH: Or request.

P. RALPH: Just a couple more questions, and the last couple of questions are about the – you know, perhaps the fading of enthusiasm amongst the searchers as a result of the sort of – and, again, maybe I shouldn't – that maybe should be my question. Because I think you indicated that you had to get the Holyrood rescue team – search and rescue team because the numbers from your own team was dropping. Is that right?

P. FRENCH: Just one second. And you said ...

P. RALPH: Because I looked at the numbers here and it seems to me that your numbers went from 24 to 23 and it didn't seem to be a particularly big jump – or a big fall, I should say. When I look at the – there's a document here. It's –

P. FRENCH: Correct, but –

P. RALPH: – 189. And page 1 says there was 24 searchers in total, which would've been all Rovers. Is that right?

P. FRENCH: Correct. On the first day, yeah, the 24 was all Rovers. That's including your search management team. On the second –

P. RALPH: And then the second day, it says –

P. FRENCH: We had –

P. RALPH: – “SAR Structure; 35 Searchers in total; 12 from CAGSAR” and “23 from Rovers.”

P. FRENCH: CAGSAR, Central Avalon Search and Rescue, correct. So –

P. RALPH: So it didn't seem to be a big change from one day to the next in terms of –

P. FRENCH: No, no. No, thankfully, it wasn't, but, I mean, we have 75 members on our list, and on a weekend, only 24 of those members were able to attend that search. Now, there's many – you know, like Melanie said, everybody got a life outside of volunteer search and rescue as well.

But the other aspect that we brought in there as well is that we increased the search area from 300 metres to 800 metres, which is a significant jump and we needed more individuals. And it wasn't – we weren't concerned that the searchers we had Saturday weren't going to show up Sunday because they actually verbalized that to us; it was that we were getting a – we were – we wanted to go for a bigger area and that we didn't know if we were going to get any more, so that's why we reached out to Central Avalon.

P. RALPH: Right. And so was that a function of the fact that this gentleman, you know, had – that this was the fourth time you'd been looking for him?

P. FRENCH: Yes, I feel so. You know – and this wasn't the first time we had to ask Central Avalon to – or for mutual assistance or mutual aid in the search for Mr. Doe either. They were present on one other search that we had. It was – actually the reason that one – we had to – it was Labour Day weekend. It was a long weekend and I believe that was another two- or three-day search as well so we –

P. RALPH: Right. And that's kind of a different issue, though, isn't it? It's that people aren't going to show up because it's Labour Day weekend –

P. FRENCH: Correct.

P. RALPH: – and they're busy with their families.

P. FRENCH: Correct, yeah.

P. RALPH: But did – in this instance, did people tell you that they'd been looking for him and he's trying to avoid us.

P. FRENCH: Yeah. I appreciate that. I don't know. I'm not necessarily sure I agree with that classification. You know, we had 24 on Saturday, we had 25 on Sunday. You know, there probably would've been a mix, but I don't personally feel that someone was there Saturday and didn't show up Sunday because it's the same person we're looking for.

P. RALPH: Okay, right.

P. FRENCH: I will, however, say that there was a – there was a sense of frustration within our group of searchers that why are we out here four times looking for this individual? So, you know,

–

P. RALPH: But it didn't necessarily affect the search or the numbers that you had.

P. FRENCH: Correct. You know, I'd probably be lying if I said it didn't affect somebody's opinion on the team or a number of individuals, but you know, it didn't affect our ability to respond to an active search.

P. RALPH: Right. Thank you.

P. FRENCH: Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: Did you want to say something, Melanie?

M. O'BRIEN: I just wanted to add it's not unique to a week to have a discussion at the last day to say: Okay, who's working tomorrow put up your hands, who's in, who's able to be here? A lot of people do work Monday to Friday and some people, I mean, I myself have taken vacation time from work to go help out with searches like this. I can't speak to this particular search but it's not uncommon to go around and

get numbers and decide at the end of that day if maybe you'd need extra support.

T. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Tom Williams.

I have some questions, and Melanie I can just follow up on that last point (inaudible) worst than in some of the other areas, but it occurs to me from your response, does it ever happen or occur that you can't get a full team out? I make up a scenario that you have a lost individual in a wooded area. It's a (inaudible) area for your team to cover. I think one of the most amazing (inaudible).

H. BLACKMORE: They back us up, no different.

T. WILLIAMS: Okay, thank you.

P. FRENCH: Mr. Williams, if I could add to Harry's point there.

T. WILLIAMS: Sure.

P. FRENCH: Paul French.

Yeah, Harry is right. Not in my time has there ever been a time we never had a sufficient response to a search.

In what Mr. Ralph was just referencing with regards to the Labour Day weekend, I mean we still had, you know, I don't know the numbers offhand but I'm saying – we still had around 20 individuals but I know this was the first search that we had for this individual and we were quite concerned for his safety and whatnot, not that we weren't any other time. But where it was also new to us and that's the reason why we had initiated Central Avalon Ground Search and Rescue.

H. BLACKMORE: Also, on all long weekends, we'll call it here in Newfoundland like Labour Day, May 24th, everybody is popular. Before those weekends come up, the week coming to that, we have an email go to everyone of our members finding out who's in town, who's not, just in case and everybody then is put on alert, that okay the first call will be going to you.

T. WILLIAMS: Okay, thank you.

I just want to go back to a topic that I think Mr. Budden had raised, generally speaking, and it's not pertaining specifically to this search but just the concept in general. And he raised it, the issue of tunnel vision and it's a question that I had raised in other case scenarios because I understand, I think, general, I'm certainly not an expert in the area, but having heard this much evidence over the last couple of weeks in terms of grid patterns and searches and you start from, obviously, the core centre and you expand out – things of this nature.

But as has been referenced previously in two scenarios that we looked at, one being the case of Burton Winters and as well in the case – the most recent case we looked at of Ches Sweetapple, they were ultimately found outside of what I will call, the layman's term, expected search areas – okay, that grid searches had done. Coincidentally, in the case of Burton Winters, all the – or I shouldn't say all the evidence, but a majority of evidence pointed to one particular area and we won't go through all but it was an open area and search efforts were put there because that seemed the most likely scenario.

In the case of Mr. Sweetapple, it was the opposite, there was absolutely zero evidence found with respect to his location. And, again, they continued their search patterns as expected, and he was found outside.

The reason I give you those two scenarios is that it begs the question, I guess, you know, in terms of search techniques: Is there consideration given, even at the early outset, to the possibility of outliers. And in these two cases we did have outliers, we had an extreme situation where it appears that there was open water but that had closed to allow Burton to get across to an expanded area. And in the case of Mr. Sweetapple, he – despite what local information they had that he typically goes off to the right, this scenario he went off to the left and wasn't anticipated.

So, I mean, even in the four or five case stories – case studies that we've looked to, we have a couple examples where people are outside – where I think what we called, lost person behaviour would give them to. And as a layperson, it comes to my mind as: Should there

be, in terms of search techniques, a percentage – for sake of another word – of assets that are given to considerations outside what may be the expected norm in any individual case?

P. FRENCH: Possibly. But I would say every search manager has to follow the evidence. You have to take the information that you have from, whether it's the RNC, whether it's the family, whether it's the person who reported him missing, whether it's someone who's seen him, you have to take that information and take it, develop it, develop a plan and use these other aspects that I talked about in establishing a search area.

So it – we're not just – you know, and I appreciate the tunnel vision. We're not just saying we must be in the 800-metre perimeter, in the yellow circle that I had here on the screen here a little while ago. That was our main focus; that wasn't our only focus. We had teams cover areas four and five times that size. It's just we didn't grid search it. It was hastily searched. It was used by – we utilized helicopters; we utilized boats to do shoreline searches and whatnot. So we didn't just stick within the 800 metres. Every bit of science, every bit of evidence that we had led us to believe that he's within that 800-metre perimeter. We didn't – you know, we did focus other energies outside of that.

I can't speak in terms of the other searches that you referenced because I wasn't part of them and I'm not privy to too much of their information, but I do believe that we do take all those things into consideration. And, you know, sometimes – hindsight is always 20/20 in that the evidence that we received at the time and then what we find out after the fact, it's like: Why didn't we do this? Or if we only knew this, we could've done that. We don't have that information at the time.

We can't – we're not a bottomless resource. We have – you know, we have a certain number of resources and assets and we have to use them strategically and responsibly. And so we can't just – you can't search everywhere. You have to have a starting point and you have to have a consistent form of evidence as to why we are searching a certain area and how we're doing that. I hope that makes sense.

T. WILLIAMS: And like you said, I'm not speaking subjectively about this particular case, but just conceptually. Maybe I can raise – I don't know if Mr. Smith has any comments on whether or not search philosophies consider outlier factors in any way, shape or form.

R. SMITH: Commissioner, Richard Smith.

That is considered. And just to reiterate what Mr. French had to say, search and rescue management is a science and it may be artfully applied, but it involves many facets. So when you're looking at the area, one of the things you do with the police, of course, is profile the lost, missing person; find out everything about them.

And one of the cases you mentioned there with Mr. Sweetapple was he was looking for the berries and where's the best place to pick the berries. And if he's in the miscellaneous category for lost, missing, overdue people, then you're talking about – they go a certain distance based on statistical analysis, as been mentioned by Mr. French as well.

But in spite of that, you look at those best areas and so you come up with scenarios. I think we mentioned this before, you know, maybe five to 10 scenarios as to where you think this person could have gone and what could have happened to them, and with those scenarios you do a terrain and typography analysis. So where could they go? What's the easiest route both natural and/or manmade? Then you form your goals and objectives as find Sally's snowshoe by 2400 hours, as an example. And then when you're looking for Sally's snowshoe you're going to come up with different strategies and tactics and with those strategies basically means, you know, how are you going to do this from the Greek word stratagem and tactics from the Greek word tassein is the who, the where and the when.

And so you break those down into investigational objectives, containment, confinement objectives and search objectives. I know that trained SAR managers use those aspects to plan the search so it's just not cast in stone and every time they come up with a plan, it's flexible. Because when you start getting information from the field then what you do is you synthesize that information and you correlate it. You turn it into useful intelligence

so you can modify and adjust the strategy and tactics as the mission unfolds. So it's a constant evolution and that plan has flexibility.

Will there always be outliers? Yes, certainly there will always be outliers because we're dealing with man and those behaviour characteristics sometimes can be unpredictable, but more often than not, you can be fairly certain the person will be in a certain corridor. And I believe it was mentioned before that typically a person wouldn't go over the top of a large mountain but they may be found around the base of that mountain, along river corridors. And I mentioned before the natural and the manmade pathways.

But it's also cognizant that when you're changing it, you're documenting that information down. You're using different types of tools and each tool gives you a different probability detection value. So you want to find out where the person is not. So a dog will give you a different type of detection probability value, as will an aircraft, as will a hasty team, an open-grid search team and then, of course, a grid-search team will all give you different types of PODs and you use those PODs to come up with a communitive POD, as you can see with Mr. French here they've segmented the area. So once you start doing multiple searches in an area you determine that, okay, an 80 per cent community probability detection value means that there's probably a good chance that subject is not in that area so you want to move to outside the initial search area, the ISA as we call it.

But there's always going to be an ROW, which is called the rest of the world, and I don't think there's any SAR teams out there worldwide that have enough resources to search ROW. But even with that being said, you look for clues because it's a clue-finding mission. Whether there are footfall impressions or whether there's a jacket, candy bar wrappers or something felt behind by the lost, missing, overdue subject, you can follow that up and give a direction of travel and some of those will lead you outside the initial search area.

And so you send specific resources, typically outside the containment confinement to look at those potential areas where you could get and develop clues. So you never just get tunnel

vision. And it's very important for the incident commander to, not only approve the plan but also to have situational awareness with the SAR manager, the operations section's chief, where he or she will always maintain that situational awareness, again, based on information flow and coordination, so they can modify and adjust as that mission unfolds.

I hope that helps you out.

T. WILLIAMS: Okay, thank you.

K. DIDHAM: Excuse me, if I may.

T. WILLIAMS: Sure.

K. DIDHAM: Sergeant Didham with the RNC, Commissioner.

The tunnel vision aspect that's being brought by Mr. Budden, that was something that I was going to discuss from incident command, as well as the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary being the tasking agency for this particular incident.

When it comes to our searches, obviously, we cannot conduct our searches without the Rovers in these aspects, but that doesn't mean that the searching stops at simply what the Rovers are doing on site and on scene.

So there's a lot of information being gathered that I can discuss now or I can discuss when I have an opportunity to speak later as to what other resources and what other avenues were explored throughout the time looking for Mr. John Doe in this particular case. So I'll leave that to you to decide whether we want to discuss that now or later when we –

T. WILLIAMS: Well, perhaps it might be more appropriate if we leave it for your evidence and we'll allow – Mr. Budden then can walk you through it directly and we'll get that.

K. DIDHAM: Absolutely, thank you.

T. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

So if I could just go back now changing gears a little bit. With respect to searches involving – and, again, this is not just specifically related to John Doe's case today. But when you have

advance knowledge that your search will involve a person who has mental health issues, are there any specific additional resources that you bring in, as opposed to an individual who did not? So does it come to mind saying, okay, these – while I know there are obviously considerations, are there any specific resources? Do you draw upon anybody either inside your group or outside your group in supporting those particular cases where you know you're dealing with an individual with mental health challenges?

G. BUDDEN: And, again, I'll just caution everybody, once again, to use pseudonyms.

P. FRENCH: Yeah, so –

UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Mic.

P. FRENCH: Yeah, so –

UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: No, mic. There we go.

P. FRENCH: Yes. There are times that we do call on extra resources. Whether they – those resources would – we would have them attend the command post, you know, I've seen that in the past. We've had psychics come to the command post and look at areas in which we've searched and based on their knowledge and education and whatnot. Oftentimes through the RNC, they can reach out to their own internal people or maybe assets that they have to seek recommendations on where they feel they can go, whether that be an inspector, whether that be an outside organization, whether it's an Alzheimer's society or, you know, somewhere that's – so, yes, there is definitely opportunities and oftentimes they are utilized.

T. WILLIAMS: Okay.

What about in terms of – I'm sorry. What about in terms of your team itself? Are there support – mental health services to support – do you feel it's sufficient services to support your teams as well as the related families and victims of search and rescue missions who would be traumatized as a result of what they may have gone through over a period of days?

G. BUDDEN: We will be diving into this later, the resource available to the team, in a more general sense. I just want to make that point.

P. FRENCH: There are – yeah, without getting into too much detail, I would say that there are resources. Whether or not they're sufficient or would we like to see more, that's a different question, but there are resources available.

T. WILLIAMS: Okay. Are you satisfied with the resources that are available?

P. FRENCH: I think there can be more done, yes.

T. WILLIAMS: Okay.

With respect to communications and communications with the families who are subject to these searches, what is your practice and policy with respect to – because I'm sure in any search where a family is involved or an individual is lost, you know, families are constantly looking for updates and things. What is your practice and policies with respect to communications with families?

P. FRENCH: So our policy with Rovers on the search and rescue side is that we leave that to the authority having jurisdiction. So in this case, the RNC. Constable Andrews was in constant communication with this particular family, I'll say at least within every four hours, I would say. I would wager it was much more than that, but at a minimum.

So – but, now, sometimes a search manager is brought in, whether that family attends the command post, and maybe we would have this – you know, so our maps with our tracking and stuff, sometimes we would bring the family and discuss with them what we have done, what we plan to do and those sorts of things. So there is that communication there, but for the most part we try to leave it to the – in this case, the RNC.

T. WILLIAMS: Okay.

And I guess my final question which is more specifically dealing with the issues before that have risen in the John Doe scenario: Is there any form of debriefing by either your group or by police authorities – I mean, in this case, there

seemed to be, for the sake of another term, some frustration that, you know, you're being called out for a fourth time on the same individual in a relatively short period of time; but, again, it would seem from the information that we've had provided to us, that there was a certain frustration from this individual because he'd been moved to a location where he wasn't very happy. So, you know, if in the event that this had been disclosed or followed up by other authorities, it could have avoided three other searches is what I'm getting at.

So in terms of issues that arise from a debriefing perspective, what role do the Rovers have in it and what role would be considered by other authorities, whether it be policing authorities or others in terms of follow-up? You know – and I know we often hear of – and this is not to be stereotypical in any ways – you know, teenagers who may run away from home. I'm sure, in some case scenarios, there are patterns. So are there debriefing processes involved to, you know, avoid repeated searches?

P. FRENCH: Yes. The short answer is yes, and there's different levels of a debrief, I guess, which goes to the point you're making is that there's a debriefing between search management – I'll just say the search management side of things. So operations within the command post, there's a debriefing there. There is also a debriefing with the team at the end of every search. That happens directly following the search. So, even on the first day, when we finished the first day, as Melanie had alluded to, is we had – Constable Andrews and I had debriefed the search team that was there and we did – we said, you know, well, who can attend tomorrow? We were getting ideas and we were briefing them. We were giving them ideas of what we were planning to do tomorrow, so that was a debrief.

We also debriefed on the second day. And post-search, typically, what we do is at our next following business meeting, we will debrief the whole team who attends our business meetings because there may have been information that come up. There may have been communications. You know, in this case, Mr. Doe wasn't found, but a couple of days later the individual was.

So – and sometimes, you know, the RNC will provide that debrief to us, right? So it's dependent on what the situation is. But we debrief as a team multiple times, I would say, and also there's that debrief with the authorities as well. And I know in this particular case, which I was happy with, is that the RNC done a great job in following up with this family, following up with the caregivers and following up with the individual, learning more and more. Not just saying: Okay, Mr. So-and-so is home; we don't have to worry about it no more. No, they went the next day. They would sit down with this individual. They would ask him questions on what he had done, why he had done it. Those sort of – so that if it did – primarily to prevent it from happening again, right? But also it armed us with information – critical information we needed to locate him additional times. So.

T. WILLIAMS: Okay. All right, that's all the questions I have.

Thank you.

G. BUDDEN: Apologies. If there is nothing following up, perhaps Sergeant Didham can now speak and, again, just remind her about the pseudonym and perhaps not going too deeply into the personal circumstances of Mr. Doe, other than is necessary to make your points.

THE COMMISSIONER: I think Mr. Budden has pointed out that despite the fact that it's about lunch hour, Sergeant Didham is going to be out this afternoon so we'll move with her testimony now.

G. BUDDEN: Maybe. At least to give her the option of not coming back if her other commitments intrude. You are more than welcome to come back if you wish.

K. DIDHAM: Thank you. I appreciate the opportunity.

So one thing that I would like to bring forward when it comes to – certainly the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary and our role as the incident command in this particular search, being – having jurisdiction, is that the way the organization is structured to deal with missing and lost persons will go beyond just the scope of

the task that we ask the Rovers to do. As I have indicated, we cannot do this job without the Rovers. But we still have other officers that are conducting searches and tasks that are not necessarily formal or organized, such as with specific to search and rescue.

So with that, I'll say that Mr. John Doe was reported to the police on this particular occasion on the 6th of November, and this was the third if not, I believe, the fourth time that he had left a particular residence. And once we've talked about this, I'd like to discuss some of the frustrations, because that word has been used periodically throughout this conversation this morning and I would like to touch a little bit on that.

He had been reported missing and, at the time, we had our K-9 unit respond to the area and conduct a search. Now, our K-9 being one of our German Sheppard dogs, with a dog handler, that's trained specifically to look for lost and/or missing people. At that particular time, Constable Jody Ryan attended and he did not find a track of that particular person. And other locations were checked, and when I say other locations checked by the street patrol, they have, in this particular area, multiple officers in multiple cars assigned. So generally what they will do is they will search roadways; they will check common areas; they will check community areas, restaurants, local bowling alleys, bars, walking trails, ditches, sides of the roads. So a lot of the times even before we reach out to the Rovers, a search is actually commenced.

Unfortunately, in this particular case, by the end of the shift – so the officer took the initial complaint at 6:45. After doing a preliminary search or a quick search around the area, we were unsuccessful in locating Mr. Doe. And then what happens, if at the end of one shift, we'll say in this particular case being a day shift, the night shift will come on. So there's a file generated. A missing persons report is documented. A general occurrence hard copy or a general occurrence report is started with the indicators describing the person, a photo if it's available. And that information is then passed on to the next shift coming.

So in this particular case with Mr. Doe, it was a night shift. That night shift, they continued to reach out to the area – sorry, the home that he had left from and also checked numerous areas around as well, and it's listed in the notes, so I won't take up your time in indicating specifically where they searched. Some was in a vehicle and some was on foot. But by 10:30 that night, it was determined that this was serious enough – a serious nature, a search for a gentleman who we had known had gone missing before. We knew that previously he had indicated that he did not want to be found for whatever reasons and that he did intentionally evade searchers and the police. So we knew some of the challenges that we were going to face in this particular search as well, having done it previously.

So we arranged for a search the following morning through Rovers. So at that point in time, we had conducted almost, you know, 15 hours of, maybe, searching as a police agency. We also will put the person on CPIC, which is an integrated police network of information. So if somebody is located or if somebody is lost, or property, we put that person on the system as being missing and we also will dispatch out a BOLO, which is a be on the lookout for. And a BOLO would have been conducted for John Doe as well. And what that is is that's a sharing of information amongst police officers working in the area to make sure that if anybody is – locates him or if anybody calls about the gentleman, then we know that he has been reported missing. And we will also reach out to our neighbouring areas of Holyrood and across the Southern Shore. That's generally, what our rule of thumb is.

So we feel in that particular case, as this is ongoing with the police initial response, organizing the Rovers, we still have members searching other areas as well, and we're hoping that that will help eliminate a little bit of the, you know, questions with where our search areas are and as to what extent we take.

The following morning, after the shift-to-shift file is generated, the file would then go to our Major Crime Unit and that unit has a designated person for a missing persons' coordinator. And that person is often used as a contact person with the family, but they will also assign Major

Crime investigators to conduct other searches. So it may be searching for bank records; it may be following up with Crime Stoppers tips; it may be following up with media releases or information that may come in. So we have a vast number of people working on any given search at any given time, not necessarily specific to that search area.

And then when Major Crime will get the file, they will continue the search and gather information. And as Major Crime or the street patrol are gathering information, they're relaying that information to me, being the incident command, and I'm relaying it to my search manager and then it's dissipated as need be.

So that's generally how the search is conducted from the beginning. And then the determination is: At what point are resources being depleted; at what point has the area have been searched and depleted? And in this particular search for Mr. Doe, we have searched the area numerous times, within the same area, on numerous occasions, on the same file, as Mr. French has alluded to. We searched on ground, on foot, on air; we have, on occasion, used ATVs; we have resources of horses – although, horses were not used in this particular case – the public, Facebook, social media as well. So we're reaching out in every way that we can to help locate the missing person and, ultimately, provide some answers to the families and their loved ones.

As I've indicated with this particular case, it was a little bit challenging. And, again, the word "frustration" has been used because we knew, from past experience with Mr. Doe, that he did not want to be found, and part of that had dealt with some of the mental health issues that the police were aware that we were having but certainly, in privacy for him and his family, all of that information wasn't necessarily shared.

And then that leads me to what roles the officers were taking behind the scenes from the active search with reaching out to Mr. Doe's social worker, reaching out to his family, reaching out to medical professionals, but keeping in mind, because of privacy legislation, a lot of times information cannot be shared without the expressed consent, as you would be aware of, from the family. In this particular case, the

family were exceptional and supportive and provided us with what we needed, but certainly, we did have to factor in some of the mental health aspects that were addressed with this.

When it comes to the frustration, I felt, that was felt by the Rovers, at no point was it ever expressed to me as the coordinator for the RNC that the searchers were frustrated with Mr. Doe or with the fact that they were searching – or that they were searching several hours, potentially covering over several areas that have already been searched. I think the frustration with this particular gentleman was the fact that he had been reaching out because he wanted to return home to his family and, because of resources, that wasn't happening.

And I think that that's the frustration was with – I'm not sure if the system is the right or correct word to say, but it was with how Mr. Doe ended up in the position that he felt he had no choice but to take these drastic steps in order to get what he needed. I don't think he had the resources or the knowledge to know how to reach out to support from his social worker, mental health agencies, his own doctor. And this, I think, in this particular case was the end result. And thankfully, we were able to find him.

And to allude to what Mr. French had said about the follow-ups that the RNC had done, there's a document which I'm sure you have within the release of the follow-up conversations with the social workers to see how do we help and how do this get resolved so Mr. Doe doesn't feel that he has to take these extreme measures, nor do we have to – and it's our job and we're only too happy to do it but, you know, if we have the Rovers spending three or four or five days on a search in one particular area and God forbid somebody goes missing in another area or we have a lost hiker or somebody injured, now we have two searches drawing on the same resources. So I think there was a movement then to try to make this situation better for Mr. Doe. And to my understanding, it has improved to some point.

G. BUDDEN: Thank you, Sergeant Didham. That was very, very helpful. Just a couple of follow-up questions.

Anybody who follows the news will see from time to time press releases, I guess, or releases from the RNC that the RNC is – and Crime Stoppers are looking for a particular individual, often a young person, but not always. And sometimes you'll notice the same names will occur more than once, much as, perhaps, happened in this instance. And I take it from your comments that a lot of the work of the RNC is perhaps – would be described as proactive, working with the resources to – that are available to see if the underlying causes can be addressed so that the person doesn't feel compelled to run away. Would that be a fair comment?

K. DIDHAM: That's a fair comment to make.

G. BUDDEN: Okay.

The other question is perhaps a little different. We've heard Sergeant Danny Williams, who you, of course, know and I believe is here today, who is the RCMP search and rescue coordinator. I'm assuming that your job is somewhat similar, but perhaps you can – rather than me making assumptions, you can tell us what your job involves, perhaps how long you've been in it and your relationship with the Rovers Search and Rescue team.

K. DIDHAM: Yes, thank you, it's valid points.

So I've been policing for 27 years. I have been involved with – as a supervisor and with the incident commander or the search and rescue aspect for [technical difficulties].

Recess

G. BUDDEN: [Technical difficulties] feel free to speak to your own experiences or not speak to them as you please. I don't want to put – make anybody uncomfortable.

Perhaps just to put some context to this, Mr. Blackmore, could you tell us – give us some sense of how many hours this team has volunteered and how many members there are on the team? If you could give me those numbers.

H. BLACKMORE: Harry Blackmore.

Rovers Search and Rescue team is made up of, right now, roughly 90 people to 100. We had 70-odd and we just took in 20, as of today. Out of the 20 applicants we took in – we started our application process this August past. We had 52 apply. By the time we laid out the rules and the walks and training they all had to do, that went down to 20-something so we ended up with 21 altogether.

Pretty well Melanie, Max and Paul are on our team with Cindy. They are the recruiting team, I'll call it, that put everything in place and did the interviews and everything else that goes with it. Even though you're a volunteer with us, to become a member of our team it'll cost you \$50 in order to become a member. You will get it back but that's what we charge. We have been doing it for 40-odd years and we didn't stop. And that will end up providing you with some vests, caps, et cetera, et cetera – stuff that we do for them.

And on the average, a person that's in our teams spends about \$1,000 on themselves by the time they outfit themselves. But if you're in the team – just for the last year and a half – and we did it on a – basically, from January 1, 2020, to last week, our team has put in 34,695 hours: that's in volunteer time. I would say, knowing what's captured and what should be there, it's probably 40,000 because not everything is captured. But that's what's done within the team itself just on volunteer time. A lot of it, taking care of the building, taking care of everything else we got don't even get added into it.

G. BUDDEN: So that's four or 500 hours on average per member over the last 18 months?

H. BLACKMORE: Yes, Sir.

G. BUDDEN: That kind of math.

H. BLACKMORE: Yup.

G. BUDDEN: And that's obviously – as we've heard from other teams – a terrific level of commitment. Do you have any ideas how many hours you yourself put in over the past 18 months, Mr. Blackmore?

H. BLACKMORE: I say on an average week, 60 hours.

G. BUDDEN: The – and I believe that because we've seen your name come up in searches all over this province where you seem to be involved – and sometimes for several days straight on a frequent basis. So that's something that's certainly, I think, should be acknowledged and known to the – to anybody who's following this inquiry.

Perhaps we'll move onto the team members. You can tell me a little bit because it's interesting how the team came to be. Where – how it – where it evolved from, how it originally developed as a search and rescue team?

H. BLACKMORE: Okay. Well, I'll let Paul read that stuff out because he was the search manager on this one and an active member and he's also got it all written down because I'll probably forget some of it.

G. BUDDEN: All right, the ball has been passed to you, Mr. French. So you can either play it or pass it on to somebody else, I guess.

P. FRENCH: Harry maybe if you can speak just to the start and then we can take it from there.

H. BLACKMORE: Okay.

Originally, when it started, Rovers were – we came from Scouting, that's where our organization started. Part of the Rover motto at that time was service. So we were active in a good many things. In those early years, EMO, Emergency Measures Organization, were put in charge of ground search and rescue in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and – because, basically, searches were happening but it was ad hoc to what was being done so there was some structure given to it by government and EMO was tasked with it. And what they did is my father, who was with EMO at the time and Ray Zinck from the RCMP, went to Alberta for a month to become rescue instructors in search and rescue; came back to Newfoundland. We were a group that was already together so we were the guinea pigs for the first course they put off and –

G. BUDDEN: When was this, Mr. Blackmore?

H. BLACKMORE: That was in 1971.

G. BUDDEN: Okay.

H. BLACKMORE: So when that was done we were actually, at that time, they gave us sleeping bags and boots and clothes and everything else and we did a course in Clarenville is where we did it. There was 12 of us that done it and right now we still have five of those original members in our team. So we were the first team organized in Newfoundland and Labrador, and Happy Valley-Goose Bay was the second team.

But then it branched out from that to being taught to the RCMP, wildlife division, et cetera and it went on and on, and the teams gradually formed. And in 1996, the association formed as a provincial body, because we all knew of each other through search and rescue so we got together, we got a grant from the federal government to hold a meeting and bring everybody together and we formed an association called Newfoundland and Labrador Search and Rescue Association.

G. BUDDEN: Thank you.

And do you have anything to add to that, Mr. French?

P. FRENCH: Certainly. So as Harry had mentioned, we have 87 current volunteers. At this present time, 10 per cent of those of our volunteer base are female. I feel like, you know, maybe I may be partial to this but I feel like we have a good mixture of ages. You know, we don't have too many one way or the other. We have some – as Harry mentioned, we have members there right – who started this program back in 1971. But we're always taking on new members and a lot of them are younger, such as myself, and I mean we're in executive roles, such as myself, and Melanie and Max. I mean, we're not that old. And so I don't feel like age is a big factor there. It's not an old boys' club, we'll say.

We cover an area – I apologize; I'm not sure if Harry mentioned this – from basically Seal Cove to Bay Bulls. If you drew a line, we cover that side of the Avalon Peninsula, which encompasses almost 220,000 residents in this area. We are a bigger team because, you know, we're based out of the capital city and the amount of population and whatnot, and we're

active because of those stats as well. But a lot of what we do is very similar to what other teams do. I don't think we're too much different.

Our team is structured in such a way that we were all searchers, or team leaders or search managers, we had that structure as well, but we also have an area of specialty teams – is what we refer to them as. And one of our – what I mean by that is we have a boat team who operate a fast rescue craft, we have a team who is trained specifically in ice rescue and we have trainers and techs and awareness people all in those teams. That particular team, there's probably 18 members. The same thing – along the same lines as the boat team. We have a drone team that consists of, currently, six members.

But all those individuals are trained under the RPAS, so the Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems; Transport Canada required training for advanced operations. So that's not a course you do in a couple of evenings and an afternoon. It's 40 hours of prep just to pass the basic exam and then you have to do flight reviews. There's 10 hours of flight training that you have to do and whatnot, so there's enormous amount of time spent in that.

We also have a high-angle rope rescue team that respond to incidents. I mean, our geographical area gives us such a need to have that team. And also previously, and is currently inactive, is a helicopter rescue team.

So those are the specialty aspects of our team as well. So that's on top of just our regular search training and operations. And all those – the people that are a part of those teams are regular members of the team. They're not specific to that team. So just because you're a high-angle member doesn't mean that you don't attend a search or whatnot. And it fluctuates, the members on those teams and who are on them. But, you know, it's individuals who show interest in those teams.

And again, this is not – you don't just become a high-angle rescue member or tech just by attending the trainings or because you're on the team. We have a protocol and a standard that we have to follow. And, you know, to adhere by that, we have monthly trainings and whatnot and scenarios and stuff. So there's a great level of

detail that go into all of those. I don't want to go into the specifics of them – maybe if some other members want to talk to them as specific. I just wanted to note that there are a number of specialty teams.

Also, we have an assortment of equipment. And, I mean, comes back to our building – our base on 24 McNamara Drive. That was no small feat in itself. I mean, we thought it was going to take 15 years to get that building. I mean –

G. BUDDEN: Sorry to interrupt. I've been in the building, a few of us here have but, of course, most people following this have not been. Can you tell us about your building and how you came to have it?

P. FRENCH: For sure.

It was no small task. I feel out of turn speaking to it as I never had to – you know, I was involved with the group, but there was many other members that had a lot more to do it than I did, but we worked at it as a team. Again, we thought it was going to be a 10- or 15-year plan. And I would say within three to four years after we started fundraising and a plan to build our building, we were able to complete that.

That mainly had to do with corporate sponsors and community support. The Town of Paradise was gracious enough to donate us the piece of land that our building sits on. You know, we had many, many partners. I won't go into them all, but I know Hibernia was a major partner there in helping us secure the funding to build that building. But it's not just an ordinary building. It's a building that's designed to withstand a 100-year storm. It's wired in such a way that it's a registered emergency operation centre.

We have MOUs with our local municipality for warming shelters. There's backup generators that can run the whole building. We're not talking, you know, a Honda generator out by the door; we're talking about generators the size of pickup trucks. So all – you know, all this equipment that we have, along with, you know, cots, sleeping bags, cooking utensils – I can't get in – it's one of those things you'd almost have to go there and spend an hour and I'll show you around to really get an understanding of the type of equipment we have and –

T. WILLIAMS: If you wouldn't mind, would you mind giving us a bit of a list because I'd like to get on the record a sense – I was trying to capture it myself today. I know it can't be exhaustive, but to give the enormity of the money that it takes to run a centre like that. (Inaudible) expensive like to be able to – but if you don't mind, just run through what you see as a list of equipment.

P. FRENCH: For sure. The best way I can describe it is we're a bunch of pack rats. Whatever any other organization – emergency organization is going to throw out, they usually ask us if we want it before they throw it out. And I don't know of a time we said no, we won't take that. We have a use for it. And just because we won't use it right away doesn't mean there won't ever come a time that we won't use it. We're kind of like the doomsday preppers.

But just our facility, our building that we have, for us to maintain yearly, we're talking around \$15,000. That is just for heat and light. I mean, our light bills in the wintertime are over \$2,000 a month. And it is funny, but we all recycle within our team and we promote it within our families and friends and whatnot, but our recycling program pays for one to two of those light bills every year. So it might sound foolish to say we're always collecting recyclables, but it pays those bills, and those are bills that got to be paid. Whether it is servicing for alarm systems or pest control or, you know, general maintenance, you name it.

It's those – I mean, that is an enormous cost for a non-profit organization: \$15,000 a year – it is probably more than that. But – and that's how we pay for it. Through fundraising, through recycling programs, through community events that we do. Most – generally all the community events we do are, you know, we get support back from that community partner. Whether it is a municipality or a running club or whatnot. They'll usually support us with a donation for our efforts so it's – Mr. Williams, is that what you were referring to, money-wise or equipment-wise?

T. WILLIAMS: And not only that but where the money gets spent. Like equipment that you

need and, you know, (inaudible), command centres, ropes, pulleys.

P. FRENCH: Yup.

CLERK: Your microphone, you didn't have it on.

T. WILLIAMS: Yeah, so just to repeat for the record. You know, the equipment for example. You mentioned fast-rescue vehicles and other snowmobiles, ATVs. Like I said, if you could give us a list just to get a sense on the record of the type of expenditures that are involved – physical equipment.

P. FRENCH: Yeah. I mean, the first one that comes to mind is the drone program. I mean, our specific drone program, we probably have, I would say, probably \$120,000 put into that program since we started it. Initially, we started, we said we needed \$70,000 and through community support, we were able to go above and beyond that, but it's continuous. Once you get into something, you can't just leave it. And, you know, all aspects of our training and equipment are like that. You can't just buy a truck and never change the oil or never put fuel in it. I mean, it's maintenance, it's care that has to be given to it.

And there's so many regulations, especially when we're talking with the drone, with Transport Canada regulations and whatnot. All of our pilots had to be properly trained. I mean, that training comes at a cost for required Transport Canada training.

When it comes to boats, I mean the Zodiac that we have – Harry, feel free to correct me whenever, but I believe some of our – I know some of our equipment has been provided by the association over the years of grants that they've been able to access through the provincial government. So that's not something that – our Zodiac, we didn't have to go out and purchase ourselves as a team, but we have to maintain it.

And there's life jackets that got to be bought. There's safety equipment, flares, you know, every piece of equipment on our high-angle rescue team; our ropes, there's a 10-year lifespan on our ropes. Our ropes are NFPA

approved, they're not a rope that you go to Canadian Tire and buy it, you know.

So there's a level of tracking that has to go with them, the maintenance programs that have to go with them. Our harnesses are the same way; helmets and – I don't know, the list goes on and on; I don't want to exhaust it.

T. WILLIAMS: No, that's fine (inaudible).

H. BLACKMORE: Yeah, most of the big equipment, it's the same as you're seeing in Deer Lake, same as you're seeing in Grand Falls-Windsor. The association will go out and we get that – how we got it was through a new initiatives fund program out of – through NSS, which is the national search secretariat in Ottawa. That's all federal money. That all came from that way, but once the teams get it we help provide it from the association but then it's up to the team to keep the maintenance and keep it up. It's a one-time grant. We don't get no money to repair it or anything else, so that's a team cost.

And as you'll see, and if you went right across different things, like when you were in Makkovik you never seen it, but the association provided an arctic tent, which we bought out of Alaska for the teams on the Coast because they needed it. But once we give it to them, it's theirs to keep, but it's theirs to maintain.

So the cost always comes into the effect of the teams trying to keep everything up. It's like a lot of the inReaches in the teams. We got a grant; we bought them; we gave them to them. Fine, you got a nice piece of gear, but now you got to pay \$20 a month to keep it activated. That's your responsibility.

So there's all kinds of different costs come into it. As Paul said, our ropes, pulleys, et cetera, belts and everything else, we have to maintain all that. Once the lifespan is up on it, you have to replace it with your own money from your team. And all this rescue gear – and it's just the same as anybody has bought anything – if you bought first aid gear, you know what it cost because it's called first aid gear. We buy rescue gear; the price doubles because it's rescue gear. And there's no difference in it.

Just to give you an example, we have rescue belts that we use for our high-angle rescue. If we want to use that belt for rappelling from a helicopter, we have to pay another \$200 for the exact same belt because it got a little small tag, one inch long by a half inch wide, that says Transport Canada certified. That's the way stuff works and that's the stuff that we have to maintain ourselves because it only got a 10-year lifespan on it. It's thrown out; it can't be used.

And all our ropes are NFPA standards, so there's a 15-1 safety factor built into everything. And that's the minimum. So we meet all the standards for the country and all these different organization, but every bit of gear that goes in there has to be maintained, and that's the problem.

Just once in every (inaudible) to get our vehicles inspected, to keep them on the road – and we might only put a thousand kilometres on them – costs us a little over \$6,000 a year just for inspections. And (inaudible) them inspected and maintained, that's what it is.

THE COMMISSIONER: It's like having Peter Ralph, Q.C. on your team. The price doubles as soon as you see his name.

P. RALPH: (Inaudible.)

H. BLACKMORE: But that's the way it goes.

And like – you were in our building. We got a new pickup there. We found out there was a program under the town that we get in on, so we had a – we raised money and we bought a new pickup, but we saved \$20,000 by getting the town to buy it in their name and then we bought it off them. So if there's a way to save a dollar, we pretty well know it. And we haven't had Mr. Ralph or Mr. Williams come after us yet on that side of it. But that's just how we keep everything going that we got. And it's a constant source of trying to figure out what to do and how to raise money to keep your gear. Like I said, we got a – quite an amount of gear we got put together.

We do have our building in there. When we set it up, it was set up with the Town of Paradise there as the backup EOC. So we have a tech on our team. Now, when you tells him to string a

wire, it might be the last thing you ever should say to him, because I'd say there's 10,000 feet of – 10,000 miles of wire in that building. Even to the part that when we Cat 5 to an outlet on the wall for our EOC, he didn't run one he ran two. So if one breaks he can let go the clip, put it right back out and put the second one in. It's backups to the backups to the backups.

So that stuff is all done. Like Paul said, the generator is there. We have used it during Snowmageddon. We have used it during the ice storms for warming shelters with the town for people coming in just to get a warm up, charge up their cellphones and go back home, stuff like that. So it's all a constant stuff. We're lucky, with some community support, that they help us out with the snow clearing and everything else. We don't have to pay for none of that stuff.

But even with everything that we get free, it still costs us quite a dollar. If we can get – if the counsel needs to know, if Mr. Commissioner wants it, I can tell you exactly what it costs. It's only a matter of phoning Cindy and find out.

But it's a quite a feat for every team to keep everything up. We're trying to make sure that everybody is incorporated, which is another job, and by being a non-profit it lets us give tax receipts. But just for us now, with the new rules for a non-profit charity, federally and everything else, if we go after any funding over \$10,000 we have to have an audited statement to be able to give to that company that's looking for it.

For us now to get an audit done, the Rovers last year paid \$5,400 to have a complete CRA audit done. That's what it is now every year. So right off the bat we know the building is 15 and the audit is another five before we go through the door. That's not counting the insurances that we're being talking about and everything else.

G. BUDDEN: This might be a good point as any to bring up the subject of fundraising. We've heard references to Hibernia and other sponsors. How big a commitment of time is the subject of fundraising and how necessary is it to be able to operate?

I can direct that, I guess, direct it to Paul but if others are better positioned to answer or want to supplement his answer that's good.

P. FRENCH: I would wager it's just as big a job as what it is training and searching. Fundraising last year hurt us. COVID had a significant impact on, not just us, I would wager globally, but I know for a fact right across Canada in search and rescue teams.

Our ability to be able to provide the service we do is based on fundraising, community events, and because of COVID, understandably a lot of those were cancelled and, with that, the funding also. A lot of teams struggled to get through that. We did as well. Some teams didn't make it through it. Not – none here on the Island that I know of, but I do know of teams on the Mainland that disseminated because of COVID and they weren't able to keep their fundraising up. There was no other option; they explored every other option.

In 2020 – or in 2019, we had 1,744 hours at community events, specifically related to – for fundraising activities. So like the recycling, you know, we try not to sell tickets and chocolate bars and those sorts of things. We try to focus our fundraising efforts on community events. So in 2019, we had 1,744 hours at those events. In 2020, we had 11½. So you can get a good understanding of what COVID done to us. So far this year, with regards to community fundraising, we're at 216 hours. So you can see it's picking up, but it's still a far cry from what we have seen in recent years and what we're used to.

We've tried things over the past, different fundraising activities, whether it's silent auctions or selling chocolate bars and selling tickets on different things and whatnot. It's difficult. I'm not a person who likes to sell a ticket. I just don't like asking someone if they want to buy a ticket. I got no problem buying one, but it's just – it's not in me. And I feel like a lot of people feel the same way. And we've found over the years that that really doesn't work for us. So we really have relied on our community partners and community support for fundraising efforts.

You know, just recently a local supermarket, No Frills, they've been putting off a couple programs. Now they've donated \$2,000 to us over the last couple months. Just because we're a community partner, they recognize what we're

doing in the community and we were an organization that they choose to support. So we're so grateful for stuff like that, but if we don't get out there to those road races, if we don't get out to the Christmas parades or the sun splashes and all that kind of stuff, we're in a bind. And it takes money to go on and if we don't have money to pay for these things, we can't respond to things. We can't afford to let this equipment go. It's just – that's not an option to say well, we don't have the money so we'll do it next year. That is not an option. If we have equipment, it has to be serviceable and it has to be functioning.

So – I don't know if anybody else has anything to add.

G. BUDDEN: Just on that last point before anybody else speaks up. Your – the equipment must be maintained, not only for the efficiency of a search but I would assume for the safety of your own members?

P. FRENCH: Correct, yeah. So, you know, just the first thing that comes to mind is ropes. I mean there is 10-year lifespans on our ropes for our rope rescue. That's because that rope has only been approved, you know, for a certain length of time. So, after a 10-year mark, then there is a threat then that possibly the rope could fail under stress or whatnot, so maybe it is not able to operate at its full capacity. So things like that.

Batteries for our drones: one battery – our drone takes two batteries, and it is about the size of those two bottles of water and probably about the same weight when they are full. A little bit different shape. They are \$1,000 a set. The drone takes two at a time and flies for 20-30 minutes depending on conditions. So in order to be able to fly around the clock, we have to have rapid chargers and six sets of batteries. Because of the makeup and structure of these batteries – they're LiPo batteries – over time and because we need them to be charged all the time, they don't last that long. So after two or three years, the batteries start to – their lifespan start to diminish. So then, we have to look to replacing those batteries.

So it is just like a domino affect. You're always, you know, having to replace or maintain

equipment. And if you stop – if there is a period where you stop, then you – it is like you're drowning; you can't catch up fast enough to get ahead of it again, right?

G. BUDDEN: From the way you talk this seems to be a – you know, it seems to be a real concern to you. You seem, like, genuinely quite, you know, quite concerned at these issues.

P. FRENCH: Absolutely. Sometimes I wonder how we do it all; it takes a team. And I know – I feel like our team is probably better off than others, and I don't know how they do it. You know, maybe that's not a fair statement or whatnot, I'm not sure. But, you know, and certainly, we have more – in some cases, we have more to look after, but that's a concern. It's – you know, it's hard to maintain it all. It takes a lot of effort. You don't just throw the gear back in the truck and park it back in the garage and say okay, well, that's it till next time. It doesn't happen that way. Just like our training happens on a weekly, monthly, biweekly basis, our maintenance has to follow that same regiment so ...

G. BUDDEN: And I understand this equipment is not just used within your own territory; that if you're called on, you'll go elsewhere on the Island with your drone or with other equipment. Can you tell me a bit about that?

P. FRENCH: Yeah. That's another level of necessity but yes, I mean, mutual assistance within the association and I would say across the country. You know if we had to – we're all there to help one another. It's that kind of relationship within SAR teams but our particular drone, I have to write letters every year and I have to get support letters from the RCMP and the RNC for me to unlock flight zones for our drone so that we can fly anywhere in the province, including military bases and whatnot so that if we do get a search in an area, I don't have to go seek those requests at that time.

I have to do that every year; I have to get those support letters and send them off to DJI, which is a company who manufactures our drone, and get those flight restrictions cleared off of our drone so we can fly in those specific areas. So that when Exploits Search and Rescue call and say we need your drone out here, can you

respond, we can respond. I don't have to say well, we're going to have to wait another day or two because I need to get flight authorization to fly there. That's all pre-work I have to do ahead of time to be able to have that response.

So, at any time – you know, we all – every team kind of has their own little niche, you know, an item that someone else can use or, you know, something that they're more familiar in than another. Ours seem to be the drone but certainly, you know, if Central Avalon needed another boat to complete a search, I'm sure it's only a phone call to Harry and we'd be too happy to help.

G. BUDDEN: This is the only drone of this degree of sophistication among the search and rescue teams in the province, I understand.

P. FRENCH: Yes, in this province, yeah. Other teams do have drones but not to this sophistication.

G. BUDDEN: And we heard this morning about its capacity.

H. BLACKMORE: The reason, Mr. Budden, that we got that drone in particular was after we had a search for an autistic, young boy, it was proven the helicopters were only driving him under the trees on us and with such – you get that Cormorant over the top of your head, you kind of – it makes a bit of noise and it scared him. So after that was – and I was totally against drones; I'll be upfront with everybody. And Paul and them knows that because of the cost of it; but after we looked for him we said okay, enough is enough, and that's the reason we went out and made a major fundraiser for that particular drone to be able to do what it does because of autistic people and – well, it worked out for a lot more things than that, but that was the main reason behind it.

G. BUDDEN: And if I understand you that the child you're looking for would be frightened by the noise of a helicopter, which would be counter productive if you're trying to find him.

H. BLACKMORE: Yeah, he told us, once we did find him four days later, that he used to hear the helicopters and he would get down under the trees and snuggle in so they wouldn't be able to

– because he thought it was going to hurt him, the type of autism he had. And, like, he told us – his parents or his family told us – he won't cross the rivers. And when we got him he was up to that in water, up to his neck, he was trying to get away from the helicopter or something like that. So that was the main reason we did it.

So now, like, if we go after someone like his condition again, before we bring in any helicopters or anything else, that drone is up working its way. And we looked for that particular child twice after that and that's how we got him.

G. BUDDEN: So this is not like some luxury toy, this is a really essential part of modern search and rescue, ground search and rescue.

H. BLACKMORE: No, it's a specific piece of equipment. There's only three or four of them got – I think it's six on a team. I'm allowed to touch the case, but I'm not allowed to have a key to it. But there's no – we don't do anything else, only search and rescue with it. We've been asked to fly – we've been asked by the town to do certain pictures for them and we just refuse. It's not for that because the way our licence reads, our licence is specific to Transport Canada and if we get caught going outside those bounds we'll lose our licence and we can't afford to lose it.

G. BUDDEN: Right.

I question – everything you've said has been very significant, Mr. French. One question that occurs to me when I hear this level of volunteerism and the work that's involved and the difficulty of doing a search is, I guess: How you got into this, why you stayed with it and why you continue to do this. You know, I'm talking to you personally, I guess. Why are you here and why – what are you getting out of this and why do you feel what you do is so important?

P. FRENCH: I think sometimes we have to ask ourselves – we all have to ask ourselves that question.

I got in through it – I started off as a Beaver at five years old. I worked my way up through the Scouting movement and I got to such an age

where I couldn't be in Venturers anymore. I held on another year, and where else do I go? Well, the next stage of Scouting is Rovers and, as Harry had mentioned, our group started as a form of Scouting. And the motto – every section of Scouts has a motto, and the motto for Rovers is service, and that's how we got started. Our service to our community was search and rescue. And it's very much – what we do in search and rescue is very much what we did in Scouting. When I present our prevention programs to Beaver groups, I typically tell them that we are no different than them, we just have bigger meals. So instead of having two or one hot dogs, we have three or four.

The drive to stay here, there's – it gets frustrating, it gets daunting, there's times when you don't have time to be at it, but, you know, there's – I always feel a sense of obligation, that, you know, I put my hat in the ring, I want to be a volunteer. So I feel there's a commitment on – for me to stay there and be as active as I can, but then we also have family life and work life as well. But it's just doing what you can for the community, you know, everybody got a role to play in the community. I feel like I like what I do, I feel like I'm good at it, I feel like it's a service I can provide, so I stick with it.

One other comment I wanted to mention with regard to the drone and its uses and whatnot. We had to search for an individual in the Flatrock area not too, too long ago, probably within the last half a year. And there was assets there from the Canadian Coast Guard, the Coast Guard Auxiliary, fire departments, police departments, medics, search and rescue and even a JRCC helicopter. And we were actually – our drone team was asked to search a specific area of Flatrock Cove to ensure that individual wasn't there because there were assets on our drone that – our drone had an asset that wasn't on anything else that we had on that call. So, you know, that might come as a surprise, and it almost come to a surprise to me, but at that – you know, all these – this equipment are tools and there's a time and a place to use them.

So, you know, sometimes they say: Well, how come you don't have the drone out? Well, there's a time and a place for it. There's a time for a helicopter and there's a time for a drone,

and a lot of times, you know, we try to utilize it at the same time.

So that was a very proud moment for me to say that what we done that night was very effective in ensuring, you know, where that individual was or where that individual wasn't. So, you know, it might be a small, compact toy-looking thing, but it has a very effective role to play in SAR.

G. BUDDEN: Thank you.

And, Mr. Hickey, you've told us that you've been involved for 30 years now, I believe you said, or close to it, and perhaps you can tell us a little bit – to the degree you're comfortable doing so – how you came involved and why you're still here 30 years later.

J. HICKEY: Thank you. Jack Hickey.

I started out in '76 with Regional Fire, so I spent 36 years with St. John's fire as a firefighter, paramedic and an officer. I worked my way up through; working side by side with Harry in the fire service and Harry was heavy into the search and rescue. So being on the specialty teams and working underneath him on the specialty teams, it was just the next progressive step that I helped out search and rescue.

So in the '90s, I started helping Harry to teach rope rescue and helicopter rescue to the search and rescue teams. And I continued along those lines until 2012, when I retired from fire, and I guess I have officially joined the Rovers in 2012. I've been with them ever since.

But – so my role with them now is searcher mostly. I'd rather be out in the street than in the command post. But I brought – I came over with a lot of the specialty teams so I hold the instructor status on the helicopter team and, hopefully, we'll get that back one of these days – we can talk about that – the high-angle team and the water-rescue team.

So holding certification with that even – it is a certification course; we're certified by a company out of Ontario called DIMERSAR, which is disaster management search and rescue. We have to recertify every two years with them, so that's all our own volunteer time.

Recertification fees are picked up by the association. And then when we come back we certify teams for Newfoundland and Labrador Search and Rescue across the Island.

So just last year we were down to Happy Valley-Goose Bay and we certified 10 members in ice rescue down there and they were from all – right on up the Coast, I think, Harry, right? Yeah. So we'll travel there, Exploits, Deer Lake; myself and Harry done the Bonne Bay team last year in rope rescue. And we'll continue – that has to be recertification because it is all – we follow the – like Paul referenced, the NFPA standard, National Fire Protection Association standard.

And if you're wondering why we follow a fire standard is because there's not a whole lot of standards out there on water rescue and, on the rope rescue side, there's so many different ways of doing rope rescue in the world that there's just too many standards out there, so this National Fire Protection is really a recognized standard and we bought into that. So we have something to follow, we have something to train to and that's where we try to bring our teams to within the service.

Through fire, 36 years, I don't know, I guess, I've been there, done it, got the T-shirt on all of it. I guess I just like helping people. I like being around the camaraderie of being with people, and I enjoy teaching and passing on what I've learned in my career. So I'll stay at it for another while. I'm 65, but I'd still rather be out on the trail doing the actual search then, like you said, back in the command post, and I'll keep doing that as long as I can. And, yeah, that's pretty well it.

Thank you.

G. BUDDEN: Thank you.

Ms. Green – Ms. O'Brien, sorry, if you could tell us the same thing: how you became involved, what it means to you and anything else. I've noticed you're taking notes so you – tell us your thoughts.

M. O'BRIEN: I got involved initially because I was interested in becoming a first responder and staying in the province and it's a really challenging field to break into, especially when

you're young and especially when you're a woman, and that's a conversation for another time.

When I started in 2017, I was told that you can be as involved as you want to be. So, within my first two years, I was recognized as someone who was at all the meetings and was at all the searches and I was nominated for positions on the executive committee. So I started then as a secretary, and I've held that position ever since.

I'm also a drone pilot. And I think when Harry mentioned that they were going to recruit for the drone team, I was actually emptying the septic tank of the command post at the time, so I definitely have worked for where I am right now. I know you've mentioned to me today that I'm young; I'm 23 years old. I'm trying to break into the field of first response and I feel that whether it's volunteer or career, I have a long wade and a long road ahead of me in this field.

I guess the why I stay is that since joining – I have a passion for it. There's a lot of self-efficacy that comes with this stuff, and I really want to make a genuinely better for those coming behind me, whether they're young or women trying to break into the field, or they're retired and they just want a good walk in the woods.

G. BUDDEN: The – so you have given the – so there's a lot you said there and a lot we could –

CLERK: Your microphone.

G. BUDDEN: Yes, that would help.

There's a lot you said there and a lot we could talk about. Just a couple of follow-up questions: The position of drone pilot, that sounds like a position of – perhaps a lot of people would have wanted to do. And you've done – so you've gone through about how many hours of training to be a drone pilot? It sounds like a lot.

M. O'BRIEN: I think Paul mentioned it already, and correct me if I'm wrong, Paul; it's about a 40-hour course, a pretty intensive exam and then there's practical training on top of that. So we did training with small Rodeo drones, as well as Spark drones – you can fly those around your home – and flight simulator. So I think we

were required 10 hours in total for that in order to be insured under our policy. And we also have biweekly training that we take part in as a team together.

And it is – you know, it's quite a big commitment to be on one of these specialty teams. I know the boat teams, the ice-water teams, the high-angle teams, they all, you know, have this similar level of commitment. So it's a pretty big thing to take on individually and it does require significant amount of support from your family and, I mean, from your work as well.

G. BUDDEN: Well, thank you, and if you have anything else to add, very interested in hearing it. If not, perhaps Mr. Day can speak to some of these same topics.

M. DAY: Yeah, thank you, Max Day.

So my story for Rovers would be pretty much the same story as Paul French's story for Rovers, except for I'm a few years older than Paul, and we like (inaudible). So I come up through the – no, it's true. I'm not 40 yet.

I come up through the Scouting program in Portugal Cove-St. Philip's. Me and Paul come up in the same program. And we did the Beavers, the Cubs, the Scouts, the Venturers. And it was just a natural progression for me. We were kind of – we knew the Rovers quite well because there was a Scouting community and they always looked – it was sort of a place to recruit the new members from, to get them, because we had good woodsmanship experience, which was sort of a big thing with the Rovers at that time, right?

So anyways, I've been kicking around the last – I think about 18 years now I've been a member with the Rovers. I'm a professional by trade and we – work in the construction industry, so that's quite a – that's a 60-hour workweek there as it is. And, you know, I've got a wife and three kids so I got a personal life that's very busy, but I still find the time for the search and rescue.

And why? I – to give you the answer, I don't know what the real answer is why I do it. I think it's because it's just been part of my life. It's – my best friends are Rovers. My group of friends

that I, you know, hang out – you know, now since COVID, there's not much hanging around with your friends anymore, but you know, that's my group of friends. You know, they go to my cabin; we go skidooning. We stood up at each others' weddings, all that stuff. That's been our life and it's been our life before we met our wives and had our children and got our jobs, to be totally honest with you.

And to me, you know, I've been kicking around the executive with the Rovers. We used to have two separate crews and we merged them together for – because it was just more efficient. And so I was on the executive probably five terms with the other crew, and then when we merged to – I came on the executive with the one Rover crew and like – just to speak words for Melanie, she's been an outstanding asset to our executive, keeping us organized, keeping us – you know, well communication to our team and just being a person that I can lean on to talk to.

And I can tell you right now, there's a not day goes by that I don't have 25 minutes' worth of texting – text messages or emails or whatnot back and forth with Melanie talking about this thing or that thing. It mightn't even be that – it mightn't be that important of a detail, but it's just the time. It's like you're always thinking about search and rescue and Rovers, you know? You're doing something, working, and jeez, did I tell – did we do this or did we remember that person or did we get this email out or is that training session organized? You know, I don't want to use micromanaging for a word because it's not really the term, but you're – you know, you're just kind of always thinking about it and always – you know, my head is always into it, much like all the people that's sitting at this table here.

And, you know, I'd like to think that I'll be here when I'm 65, 70, 75, whatever, like the fellas – you know, we've had a good retention for some members that's been here 50 years. I mean, there's fellas there probably 75 years old and, I mean, while they're not good searchers anymore because of they're just aged out for it, they're very good people to have on our – have at our table. They've got lots – a wealth of knowledge and you know, they just – they – you know,

they've helped us get to where we're to and they're a very important asset to our crew.

And, I mean, I guess one of the original members runs the – runs our recycling program, and, you know, that's – as silly as that sounds, it's such a huge commitment for him and he's – you know, it pays the power bill for the most expensive month for us or whatever, right?

So I take a lot of pride in the organization and I, you know, wear my search and rescue hat first, usually before my work life, most times, to be totally honest with you. And I take a lot of pride in it. And, you know, I like that, yes, we can help people; we can train. There's – and all that stuff.

So I don't know if that answers your question about me personally, but hopefully.

G. BUDDEN: It does, and I appreciate that answer.

Those really were all the questions I have. If there's a topic that I didn't cover that you think is important – any of you – by all means speak up. What will happen now is the – as you've no doubt seen from earlier today, the other lawyers will – all likely will have questions for you as well, as may the Commissioner. So – and if at any point you sort of realize, damn, I wish I'd mentioned that, hold the thought or say it, you know, you're here because we value your knowledge and wish to learn from what you know.

THE COMMISSIONER: Go ahead, Sir.

P. RALPH: Anyone can jump in and answer this question, but I am just wondering how many searches do you think on average the – your group, the Rovers, does? Harry, do you have a sense of that?

H. BLACKMORE: We average between 25 and 30 each year. Last night was number 30 for this year.

P. RALPH: Was it?

H. BLACKMORE: Yeah, last year – no, last night was out 30th for this year.

P. RALPH: Right.

H. BLACKMORE: We have gone as high as 35 but the average is 25 to 30.

P. RALPH: Right. And any sense of, on average, how many people would be involved in each of those searches?

H. BLACKMORE: Anywhere from, I'm saying, 25 to 50 odd. I wouldn't be able to say for sure but that's pretty close.

P. RALPH: So any sense of what the Rovers budget is on an annual basis? Do you have a number?

H. BLACKMORE: Do you know, Paul? I really honestly don't know.

P. RALPH: Right.

H. BLACKMORE: I can have it for you.

P. RALPH: Right.

H. BLACKMORE: I can get the information, like right to the cent, that's not a problem.

P. RALPH: Right.

H. BLACKMORE: But right now, I can't.

P. RALPH: And it's interesting to me as well that you've got several sources of revenue and, you know, I don't know if anyone across the country has ever broken this down in terms of the, you know, amount of money that comes from government – or the percentage of what is spent by the ground search and rescue teams comes from government. What percentage would come from businesses? What percentage would come from fundraising? And what comes out of the pockets of the members? Any sense how that would break down?

H. BLACKMORE: If I told you what I spent out of pocket, next thing one of you'll be hired for the wife to sue me.

But – no, a dollar amount I wouldn't be able to give you that way. There is no government funding comes in every year to the team itself. The only funding that comes from government is

through the association so we can hold our meetings and a few things. But the actual team, there is no government funding comes in whatsoever. That's all raised by fundraising and going to different communities looking for money. We even went one year, we wrote every single town council in our district to see what we could get and we got if anywhere from \$50 to \$1,000.

P. RALPH: Right.

H. BLACKMORE: You just keep going looking for it. But the actual teams – there's no team on the Island has any government funding to keep it going every year.

P. RALPH: Because it's interesting now, this is – I don't know how many teams we've heard from over the last few weeks but it is – of course, it's extraordinary how much time and effort and the sacrifice that people make, but I guess the other thing that's kind of noteworthy to me is that people seem quite passionate about it. And it seems to me – and I'm not quite sure where that comes from but it perhaps is in part because it's a volunteer organization, which you guys kind of have a sense of ownership in; that you kind of made this organization and it's you guys that kind of own it. Do you want to speak to that?

H. BLACKMORE: I think we have –

P. RALPH: It's different. If you had four people here from perhaps the fire department or four people from the police department or within the civil service, I mean they may be, you know, quite committed to their jobs but you don't often see the same kind of passion, and I would almost say joy in the work that they do.

H. BLACKMORE: I guess it's something that, like as Max and Paul and them said, we kind of grew up with and we used to always get most of our recruiting from the Venturer group because we were in Scouting, so when they became of that age to come in to Rovers, once they came in to 18 years old, they came in to the team. We gradually made sure that they had what they needed to take part in it, and the passion I think just grows from what we were doing from year to year.

All of the newer people coming in like recruiting that we do now is a bit different because the Scouting movement is pretty well gone as far as being a recruiting system for us. We do get them from different organizations but mainly it's from the general public like Melanie said. But it's just a passion that I guess grows on you.

It's no different than I know some of you people here on this table run, some more jog, some more take their dogs for a walk, it's just a passion that they do on the different trails and everything else, it's hard to answer. How we – why we do it. I wouldn't be able to tell you.

P. RALPH: Right.

Why you do it, but also it's how you do it because, like I said, everyone that we've heard from really has, you know, brings a passion to the work.

H. BLACKMORE: This whole organization from the whole 800 members that I know have a passion for it. We very seldom get anybody in our association that is in it just to say that they're in it, so they can put it on a resume. They might start off that way, some of them get in to use as a resume pad, but they quickly change their tune when they get into it. It's a lot of friendships made forever and ever.

And it's like myself has been national president for the whole country for 10 years and I was vice-president for five before that. I know enough search and rescue people across this country that have become long, long, lifetime friends and the passion that goes from here, from Newfoundland, is no different from here than right up North or across the other coast.

P. RALPH: Right. So it's interesting because, I mean, it would be hard to put a price tag on the amount of free labour and work and fundraising that, you know, the provinces gets.

H. BLACKMORE: We did do it once just for Newfoundland a few years ago, we added up the number of hours that we had punched in in searches and that was at a \$25-an-hour rate. There about 15 years ago there was an organization that took it on to found out what a volunteer was worth, and it came out at \$25. Now, it's \$35, but we left that \$25. When we did

our calculations the last time, for that year, we saved the provincial government \$5.65 million in labour.

P. RALPH: And that doesn't include fundraising?

H. BLACKMORE: No, that doesn't include anything, only labour.

P. RALPH: Right.

H. BLACKMORE: That doesn't include – when you phone – the RNC calls me for a call; the first thing I'm doing is rolling up with half a million dollars worth of equipment.

P. RALPH: Right.

H. BLACKMORE: That's not counting any labour.

P. RALPH: But what's interesting to me, as well, is that – so, I mean, obviously, that's a tremendous, you know, contribution to the province. But as a result of you guys owning it and, sort of, this is your operation, you know, you bring perhaps a different level of energy to an operation that maybe someone who it's their job might bring. I mean, you guys, you go – everyone seems to go to these operations and searches –

H. BLACKMORE: It is a bit different than if you worked at it full time because different things, I guess, form into it. I'm the same as Jack. My background is firefighting. Yes, and I loved it, and it's a career for anybody. But I guess there are things in that that you wouldn't do like a volunteer here in this racket because it's just a different type of passion. And so that's just the way it goes. It's something that we love; it's something that we've been at. And, I guess, when the call does come in there's a certain amount of an adrenaline rush. I don't know, I suppose there is to us now as old hat. But we enjoy it.

Just last night at 5:30, I was sitting down from supper, the next thing off goes the phone and Debbie Andrews said: Guess what? I said: Yeah, where are we going? East Coast Trail. So down we goes to Doran's road and three hours later we found the gentleman, and he's gone home, and

we packed up, and we come on home and that was it. And that whole operation last night, because of the time and everything else, I would be sending a bill to the RNC for \$300. So we supplied 24 fellas – 25 fellas last night, a half a million dollars worth of gear, for \$300. Now, if you can beat it, let me see it.

Because as we did before, and when COVID started, we had a team that supplied their command post to a certain bunch, they wanted to use their command post for a COVID command post; they did. And the big thing that come back when we said: Okay, it's going to cost you \$40 an hour. The command post cost is a half and million bucks. Yeah, but, he said, you're a bunch of volunteers, why do we have to pay you for it for?

We're not volunteering everything. It takes money to run this damn thing. Excuse me. But we're volunteers to the point that all our labour is free; we'll do what we can and we raise what we can, but that's how we came to an agreement with the RCMP, the RNC and Department of Justice that we can charge \$40 for our command post and \$20 for a pickup to go to a call so we could help pay for some stuff. We just – you just can't raise the money like we used to before. It's not out there. And now that there's – everybody – since COVID, everybody and his dog is out there trying to raise five cents.

So we pay a few – we have a few bills. Like, the Rovers, we're lucky. When we built our building, we knew that the RNC had a boat. So we approached them and they said: No, we can't pay you to put the boat there because we have a contract with a company. We said fine. So when the contract was up, we put a bid in the same as everybody else. Only we undercut them. We knew darn well we go lower than anybody. So we have the RNC boat in our building, and you people have all seen it over in the bay, and we charge them \$800 a month to put that boat there. That helps pay for the lights that we're putting on in the building.

And the cheapest they could get, the bids that came in at that time, from what I understand, was \$1,200-plus and we said \$800. We thought that as – we didn't even think we were going to get it at first; we thought it was too much. And that's been like that now for 10 years.

P. RALPH: Right.

H. BLACKMORE: So that's how we keep going.

P. RALPH: Mr. French, did you want to say something?

P. FRENCH: Yeah, and I can understand and appreciate – and thank you for trying to articulate why it is we do what we do and why we continue to do it. It is difficult to understand; for us, it's difficult to articulate. Harry's done a great job surmising it for sure.

But I just want to – I wanted to elaborate in that last night, supper hour, we got a call for a missing person on the East Coast Trail. I had just gotten off work; I never even got out of my truck in my driveway when Harry had called me to put out a call to the crew. I did that.

When I got in to my home, my wife was there. She's a shift worker. She's trying to get ready to go to work for that night. She's trying to cook supper, and we started potty training a 21-month-old, our daughter. It was a scene in my place last night. And then a search on top of it. I said: Well, I can't go; I can't leave. You know, we made this commitment to the do the potty training.

But then, you know, we got our supper and we're working through things and whatnot, and then in the back of my mind is, well, jeez, I wonder what's going on down there now. I wonder what's after happening. Is there anything I could do? Jeez, I wish I could go. So then I said: Okay, well, when I get my daughter to my bed, maybe I can call my mother and see if she can come stay at the house while I go to the search and – which is what I done.

And then I called Harry to say, you know, I called Mom. She's going to come up and look after my daughter when she goes to bed, so I'll be there, but I'm going to be a little bit late. I mean, all – some people may think I'm crazy to even think that. Like, they would never think that, but that's the way I operate and I'm sure everybody else here operates the same way, is that we're always trying to do what we can to help and give back and it's – you know, I don't know if there's a pressure on us to do that, but

it's – that's what – I felt that I could have helped out last night. And it's important for us to acknowledge that family support. Because if we don't have that, we don't have nothing. And there's times that that's frustrating on my family and they're saying why are you doing this – like, why are you leaving your family to go do this? But it's our way of giving back to the community.

M. O'BRIEN: I think you mentioned, too, that volunteers have a different sense of passion than somebody who would be a career firefighter, for example. The hard part about being a volunteer is that you can't turn it off. Once you're – if you're a career – you know, your shift ends, you go home, that's it. I mean, you're not on until you're on the clock again the next day, whenever that time is. But as a volunteer, I mean, we're on call all the time. You know, you're free to say no, but you get that feeling in the back of your head saying: Well, what's happening there? I wonder if they need a drone. We only have, you know, so many members on this team; maybe they need that team. You just can't turn it off when you're a volunteer, so I think that's the difference between being career and being volunteer. It's a lot of pressure on people who are doing this out of the goodness of their hearts.

P. RALPH: I have no further questions.

Thank you.

T. WILLIAMS: I think you can see from Mr. Ralph we're all fans, and we've seen this kind of dedication and expressions of interest right across the province and Labrador. I mean, it's phenomenal, the effort that goes into this. It literally blows you away. I've had the benefit of sitting down and hearing this, and I've also had a tour of your facilities and I can't get over it. So one of the things we're trying to do here is make improvements. And I think, on the face of it, one of the biggest improvements we can make is to have these organizations funded properly.

And I know we've had the general kind of discussion today and I know you probably don't have the resources available, but we've got a sense that you do a lot of fundraising – you know, a tremendous amount of fundraising on

your own and, as well, you know, I was trying to capture a list of the expenses that you got.

So I'm not looking for an audit or anything of that nature but I just wonder, your own financial records in terms of – you mentioned you get financial statements done. Would there be any documentation – because I think it would carry a lot of weight if we can put more meat on this bone in terms of here's what it costs our organization to run. We're talking two different things, I think, Harry, and you might be able to speak to this. Obviously, there's NLSARA that is the governing body for the province and then we have all the individual teams, so I think this group is probably in the unique position to be able – or I shouldn't say this group; but at least Harry is – to speak to the organization as a whole, and it kind of runs out of Paradise, and the individual, for example, Rover groups.

So even though you may not have it today, are there paperwork available that we could see here's what the budget is and here's where we raised money? Because I know you do get it from not only provincial organizations, you apply for every bloody grant that's available in the country, you know, some you're successful on and some you're not. But I think it would be very useful for the Commissioner in looking at one aspect of search and rescue being finances, as to the strain and pressures that SAR teams are under, under this province, and there's nothing like hard, fast numbers to drive that home. So I think we might – I know you can't speak to it today, but –

H. BLACKMORE: Yes, I can.

T. WILLIAMS: – do you think we can get that?

H. BLACKMORE: I can have that for you within a half an hour if you want it. But I can have it broke down – I'll give you a five-year statement for the association, every cent; I can give you a five-year statement for the Rovers, every cent, tomorrow morning, no problem.

T. WILLIAMS: Well, even if we had it prior to wrapping things up. I mean, if the counsel for the inquiry is okay with it, I think it would be a very useful document or documents to have on the record.

H. BLACKMORE: Just let me know how many years you want to go back.

G. BUDDEN: We plan to explore some of these issues in greater detail at the policy round table and so, yes, those are very important issues that Mr. Williams has raised and we're going to be going forward with them.

H. BLACKMORE: Mr. Ralph said we (inaudible) having a meeting coming up this week, so I can have them for that, no problem whatsoever.

G. BUDDEN: That's what I was referring to.

T. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

THE COMMISSIONER: Yeah, it's a general question for Mr. French, going back to this morning's session. What do curious people bring in the way of advantage or disadvantage, or liability or otherwise when you're in a community and you're set up there? How does that impact what you do?

P. FRENCH: Sorry, Mr. Commissioner, can you repeat the first question?

THE COMMISSIONER: Yeah. So you have search, you're setting up there, people are coming around and looking and they want to help or don't want to help, what do they bring or how do they hinder your work?

P. FRENCH: Sometimes it's a bit of both. I don't know of a hinder but it does create more of a task sometimes. Sometimes we get that and sometimes we don't. We refer to that as a spontaneous-convergent volunteer: People in the community, who are probably much like ourselves, that are just wanting to help. Maybe they might be an avid East Coast Trail hiker, maybe they might be familiar – a hunter in the area or whatnot and they know the area and they feel they can give back and help.

We tend to see it more for missing youth than what we would other individuals. It's just something I've seen. But we will take spontaneous volunteers and incorporate them into our group. Actually, on our first search for Mr. Doe, we actually had spontaneous volunteers and actually it was people who had

direct contact with him in his place of residence where he was to and that; even though they were off shift, they wanted to help. And, you know, they felt that they could be part of the solution and they were.

So, you know, depending on what the situation is, depending on what the search is, depends on how do you utilize those extra resources. Sometimes it can be giving them a task of containment. Sometimes it could be giving them a task of checking a certain area that is maybe of a lesser risk and sometimes it's bringing them in as part of the team. So if we have a team of seven searchers, now we'll have eight: so we have seven searchers and one spontaneous volunteer. And we'll give them a quick understand of what we expect of them and how the system operates and we can go on from there.

So we would take their information, they would be included in our records on the EMwerx system and we would go from there. So oftentimes, we do have that and sometimes we don't: it differs.

THE COMMISSIONER: Great. Thank you.

Yeah, so I will – I'm wondering if someone like Mr. Bartlett who's been sitting in on the sessions today, would you like to have anything to – any questions you want to ask anybody, Sir?

W. BARTLETT: My name is Wilfred Bartlett, by the way.

I've been sitting here all evening and this morning watching the Rovers talking about what they do and their passion for doing it and I am so very impressed.

I had a sister who lived in Labrador City; she went down there when the community opened up. She ended up with a Citizen of the Year and a Builders Award, one of the people running and made Labrador City what it was. And she donated her life to help other people out down there with the Girl Guides and all this. And, Gwen, my sister, she was never a follower. She was a leader and that was it. She didn't wash the dishes. Now, you're going to wash the dishes; you wipe them, that was her policy. And – I get emotional on times.

I've been a volunteer now this last 45 years. The first 40 years of my life, I did nothing, just try to live. After that, I started getting involved in stuff. I was involved in a lot of stuff, a lot of travel, a lot of expense out of my own pocket. Many times, I know I ran up one trip in here \$1,350 of my own money, never got a cent back. Didn't bother it, next time I went on again because I thought I was doing something, and after a while, I got kind of burned out. People, I felt, wasn't appreciating it; didn't care what you were doing or whatever, and I gave it up for three years.

All of a sudden, I felt useless. What am I living for? So I had to get back into it and I've been back into it ever since and I'm still doing my little bit now by being here. I went to the conference that they had done there, the university had done there a couple of weeks ago. I didn't get much out of that. Anybody who read my letter in *The Telegram* last Friday, when I very first read it because we never got what we went in to see, but at 85 years old I'm still doing it. It's a job to do it. I can't go in the woods anymore and help people for their search. I got a job to walk from the car in here but it's still, you know, there's something in me wanting to do it. I can't even, like you people, couldn't explain why you do it. It's just something I believe is born into people that they do, right, and that's it.

Thanks.

THE COMMISSIONER: Well, thank you so very much.

And also, I think for the cool, calm, collective people that you are, the energy that you give, the highly motivated people that you are, that will be reflected certainly, by how the lawyers are going to make recommendations to this particular inquiry. I believe that your efforts aren't lost or forgotten and it's clear that we're so much the better off for having volunteers like yourself.

So, Geoff, you can tell us what's happening today and the balance of the inquiry so everyone knows what's going on.

G. BUDDEN: Yes, we have one witness yet to hear from today. That would be Mr. Rumbolt, the director of Emergency Services, as we've

heard at every other phase of the inquiry. And I think that will be a fairly quick witness, perhaps 10 or 15 minutes.

So that is it for today and really it for this week. Our next order of business would be the policy round tables beginning at this very place, I believe.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: No.

G. BUDDEN: No, oops.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: The MUN Signal Hill Campus.

G. BUDDEN: Thank you. The MUN Signal Hill Campus, I stand corrected. And we will be there on Monday and for all of next week. And so other than that, we're pretty much done.

Thank you, again, for your co-operation, meeting with me in advance and providing us with information and showing up today and informing us as you have done. So thank you.

And I guess we can continue, if we'll only be a few minutes, perhaps to our next witness, or what do you think, Mr. Commissioner?

THE COMMISSIONER: Yeah, totally agree.

I think that the team members of the inquiry have to keep an eye on their emails because we may be getting into another level of COVID and we may have to work on the fly in determining how the policy round table will go. Anyway, I'll leave that to you to be in touch with counsel.

G. BUDDEN: Okay. Thank you.

And, Mr. Ralph, do you wish to –

P. RALPH: Yes –

G. BUDDEN: – direct your –

P. RALPH: – thank you –

G. BUDDEN: – witness?

P. RALPH: – Mr. Commissioner.

Mr. Rumbolt, perhaps you can describe – explain your position within the provincial government.

M. RUMBOLT: Good afternoon, Commissioner, it's Mitch Rumbolt. I'm the director of the Emergency Services Division. As such, I guess one of the main functions we provide is a 24-hour number for police agencies to contact when they're looking for air support when they have tasks around search and rescue teams.

P. RALPH: And perhaps you can describe that process. How does it come about that the – your division and the officials with your division become involved in providing air support?

M. RUMBOLT: We would receive a phone call from one of the authorized officials of either police agency, the RNC or the RCMP. That phone call would then – during regular business hours, would be answered by one of our REMPOs, a regional emergency management and planning officer. After hours, it would be answered by a contracted answering service that we employ and the information would be passed on to the REMPO at that point to contact the authorized police official.

P. RALPH: And so who is authorized to call you? I understand it's not everyone that can call the Emergency Services Division.

M. RUMBOLT: That's correct. It's not every police officer. Obviously, there's hundreds, if not thousands, in the province. It would only be certain designated officials through established processes. Those police officers would know and our team would know who those people are as well.

P. RALPH: And so – I guess in this instance the call to Emergency Services Division with regard to search for John Doe would have – I think would have been – would – Debbie Andrews would have made that call in this instance?

M. RUMBOLT: That's correct.

P. RALPH: And so what happens once you get that call from Debbie Andrews; what do your officials do?

M. RUMBOLT: In that case, our staff member on call, the REMPO, would reach out to government Air Services to see if a contracted helicopter is available and if it was, then they would seek to have that aircraft – rotary-wing aircraft, helicopter deployed.

P. RALPH: In the last three round tables, we've sort of described the situation when one of those is unavailable – and perhaps we don't have to do this today; we've just kind of gone through the process with the JRCC. We'll just – perhaps we'll just go through the process now that we have before us, and we can go to Exhibit 148.

And perhaps you can describe what you are seeing here in this exhibit.

M. RUMBOLT: Exhibit 148, Commissioner, is an email from one of our Regional Emergency Management Planning Officers, Judy Bond, to a distribution group consisting of myself as director; the manager of Plans and Operations at the time, Paul Peddle, who has since retired; Derek Simmons, who was the fire commissioner; a generic email account that we cc all our emails to; communication officials with the Department of Justice; the assistant deputy minister; and the other REMPOs; and our administration officer for the division.

It's regarding the missing person in Foxtrap. The date on that email is November 7, 2020, at 12:03 p.m.

P. RALPH: And perhaps you can describe what's written there and what's happening.

M. RUMBOLT: As indicated, it is from Ms. Bond. She is saying that at 11:37 hours that morning she received a call from Telelink to contact Constable Debbie Andrews, and her number was provided. Constable Andrews is a member of the RNC, and she was requesting air support in relation to a search for a missing male.

At 11:39, Constable Andrews informed – sorry, Ms. Bond contacted Constable Andrews and confirmed that a request for Air Services had gone in for the 52-year-old missing male: Mr. Doe. And the ground search and rescue team, in this case being the Rovers, had been deployed since 9:30 a.m. that morning. And the Coast

Guard had also been activated to conduct an onshore search close to the missing person's residence.

At 11:41, Ms. Bond contacted government Air Services to request air support. Due to the weather, they would have to check with the pilot of the most appropriate aircraft under contract to see if they could fly.

At 11:48, government Air Services confirmed that a 407 – that's a type of helicopter – out of Clarendville could assist in the search and it was – that aircraft was chosen because of the windy conditions in the Conception Bay South area. And Ms. Bond further indicated that the dispatch or pilot would contact Constable Andrews for coordinates at site.

P. RALPH: And who decides what helicopter is being sent?

M. RUMBOLT: That would be done by government Air Services, if it's a contracted helicopter, to determine. In this case, they went with a slightly larger and more powerful helicopter is my understanding, because of the wind conditions, and that one was based in Clarendville. But it would be through government Air Services that dictates which helicopter goes.

P. RALPH: And once the helicopter is engaged, what role do your officials have in, sort of, dictating or suggesting what the search should be that the helicopter is engaged in?

M. RUMBOLT: Members of my team would have no input regarding search tactics, or patterns or anything of that nature. It's more of an administrative function to ensure that the, you know, bills get paid at the end of the day for the contracted services that are provided.

P. RALPH: And perhaps we can just briefly go to Exhibit 186, page 69.

I think this is – (inaudible) go ahead.

CLERK: (Inaudible.)

P. RALPH: Sixty-nine.

CLERK: (Inaudible.)

P. RALPH: Exhibit 186, I'm sorry.

CLERK: I thought you said (inaudible).

P. RALPH: No worries.

CLERK: Page 69.

P. RALPH: Yeah, please.

Okay, so if we go back to the page before it'll indicate that we're talking about November 7 – there he is. Okay, you can go to the next page again. And if we go to 12:34, so you've got the helicopter lands at 12:34. And, I guess, so the call went to Telelink at 11:37 and the helicopter was there at 12:34.

Perhaps, now, we can go to Exhibit 149 and, again, perhaps you can explain what's happening in this exhibit.

M. RUMBOLT: Commissioner, that would be an email from Ms. Bond again to the same distribution group regarding the same incident. It's dated November 7, 2020, at 3:06 p.m. Ms. Bond indicates that at 2141 hours – in speaking with Ms. Bond I've confirmed with her that this was, in fact, a typo. The military time there was incorrectly used: 2141 would be 9 p.m. at night; the email was sent at 3 p.m. in the day.

So following our protocols of following up every two hours, Ms. Bond has told me that that should have read 1341 hours as opposed to 2141. She spoke with Constable Andrews to obtain an update on the missing person. At that time, the person had not been found and the air search was ongoing. It will continue for another while until near dark, at which time the helicopter will return to Clarendville.

Constable Andrews reported that at that time, they will not be conducting an air search, and Ms. Bond did remind Constable Andrews of our services and our ability to seek air support at night if that was required.

And if the person is not reported as found overnight, they will re-evaluate their search in the morning and will contact us if they should require further air support.

P. RALPH: Perhaps we could go to Exhibit 150.

Describe what's happening here, again, Mr. Rumbolt.

M. RUMBOLT: Commissioner, again, it's an email from Ms. Bond to the same distribution group dated November 8th at this time, 2020, 7:39 a.m.

Ms. Bond indicates that at 7:27 a.m. she received a call from Telelink who transferred through Constable Debbie Andrews of the RNC. Constable Andrews requested air support to continue the search for the missing person originating from the day previous.

At 7:30, Ms. Bond contacted government Air Services to request air support.

At 7:35, she had received – Ms. Bond had received a call from government Air Services. They contacted Newfoundland Helicopters and they are sending the same helicopter from Clarenville that was used yesterday.

Of note here, Commissioner, is the contract is with Canadian Helicopters and it's my understanding that they use Newfoundland Helicopters as a subcontractor.

P. RALPH: Exhibit 151.

Mr. Rumbolt, if you could explain what's here in this exhibit.

M. RUMBOLT: So, again, it's an email from Ms. Bond to the same distribution group dated November 8, 2020, at 1:02 p.m., so 1302 hours.

Ms. Bond indicates the missing person has not been found and additional two, two-hour increments have been approved. Mitch – that would be me – has approved the additional two hours starting at 1330 and that Ms. Bond will contact Constable Andrews at 3:30, 1530 hours for an update on the search.

P. RALPH: Exhibit 152.

M. RUMBOLT: Another email from Ms. Bond to the same distribution group, November 8, 2020, 3:26 p.m., 1526 hours.

At 3:19, Ms. Bond had spoke with Constable Andrews of the RNC. The missing person has not been found. The air search has ended and they have exhausted the search area. They are revisiting their search strategy and we will be contacted should further air support be required.

P. RALPH: Exhibit 157.

And can you identify what this document's all about?

M. RUMBOLT: This is a typical invoice we receive from the helicopter contractor, addressed to the Fire and Emergency Services Division, which is the Emergency Services Division, indicating the number of hours and fuel and the associated expenses that they incurred, and the total is listed there.

P. RALPH: And the total was, I think, \$7,646. Is that right?

M. RUMBOLT: That's correct.

P. RALPH: Okay.

And the last document is one we haven't really seen before. I'll go to it anyway: 158.

M. RUMBOLT: Yes, Commissioner, this is an aircraft flight authorization. It's completed within our division by our administration officer. Basically, it tracks and allows the accounting and bills to be paid for the aircraft. Effectively, we reconcile the number of hours and ensure that the appropriate billing is applied and the bill gets paid.

P. RALPH: I have no further questions, Commissioner.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

Any (inaudible) questions of this witness, Mr. Williams?

T. WILLIAMS: Nothing, no.

THE COMMISSIONER: Mr. Budden?

G. BUDDEN: No questions for this witness, thank you.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

Please continue, Sir.

G. BUDDEN: Mr. Commissioner, that is all the evidence we have for this phase of the hearings and we – our next matter, of course, are the public policy – the policy round table, which presently is scheduled to begin Monday.

THE COMMISSIONER: All right, well, thank you all very much for your attention and participation. It's very highly valued.

And we will take a break now until the next session.

CLERK: All rise.

This commission of inquiry is concluded for the day.

Thank you.