

Statement by A/Commr. Peter Hourihan, Commanding Officer of “E” Division

I wanted to share my response and reaction to the BC Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA) report entitled “Small Town Justice – A report on the RCMP in Northern and Rural British Columbia”.

I have read the report in its entirety and there are a number of aspects to the report that are beneficial for the RCMP, positive and negative. I acknowledge that the report is based on observations/discussions that the BCCLA had with community members. It is presented from the workshop perspective. While there are areas of the report that I would like further information before coming to a conclusion, there are opportunities in the report that we can look at to provide quality policing across British Columbia.

In respect of the positive aspects that are highlighted in the various communities, there are some good observations made and there are trends that are evident. For example, the community policing type of activities, beat/bike patrols and youth outreach programs are generally reported very favourably. This supports what we have heard before; when our folks are engaged with people, the feedback is good. We will take these examples and continue to champion them throughout BC.

The report highlights a number of negative police experiences by people in the communities. For some of these examples further information is required and we can work with the BCCLA and the communities for clarification and elaboration. There are some trends, however, and we will look at those areas for potential to better meet the needs and expectations of the communities. While it is true that many of the negative interactions with our police officers are during enforcement activities, they can offer insight into how people feel and think and what their expectations are when dealing with the police. It is important for our police personnel to know and understand these thoughts and feelings. Again, our goal is to provide quality policing to the communities we serve.

There are issues worth looking at, by community, to determine the accuracy, extent, scope, etc., of the issue. The RCMP is willing to listen, learn and adjust. The communities can help us to better understand that information so that we act appropriately to it.

Fortunately, our Detachments meet regularly with the communities to determine policing priorities and address concerns. These avenues provide a valuable mechanism for community feedback as we move forward. We are committed to improving policing services and community engagement is key.

I would ask those with issues, concerns, suggestions or feedback to speak to us – engage with us – connect with us.