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Witness Protection Program Act - Annual report: 2005-2006

Statistics

This is the tenth Annual Report on the *Witness Protection Program (Act)* as required by section 16 of the Act.

The RCMP's Witness Protection Program (WPP) continues to be an effective tool for law enforcement to combat terrorism and organized crime. We continue to see the benefit of the WPP as an important program in support of national priorities, including the dismantling of organized crime groups in Canada. The benefits of new funding introduced in 2001 as part of an organized crime initiative continue to support Witness Protection and its ability to provide the assistance required.

The statistics included in this report are based on the assistance provided by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) between April 1, 2005 and March 31, 2006. Protectees include individuals from RCMP cases, protectees referred by other Canadian police services and foreign protectees under subsection 14(2) of the Act. Protection given under subsection 14(2) is on a cost-recovery basis including the related expenses of RCMP personnel.

In order not to jeopardize the integrity of the Program, or the safety of any individual within the Program, statistics have been provided on the most relevant areas of the Program, without detail about the individual cases involved.

During this reporting period, the RCMP provided presentations to visiting foreign officials on the WPP and attended several conferences as invited guests in countries with similar law enforcement concerns. The RCMP also received several requests for assistance from foreign countries to accept witnesses into Canada.

The total number of RCMP protectees accepted into the program increased from 37 to 66 while the number of protectees referred by other law enforcement agencies remained basically the same from 34 to 35. The number of cases requiring an identity change increased from 35 to 54. The total number of new cases decreased from 86 to 53.

The total cost of the Program has decreased from \$2.5M last year to \$1.9M this year. It should be noted that the RCMP wages, expenses and administrative costs are not included in the above noted figures.

Fluctuations related to admissions and costs from year to year are largely affected by law enforcement activities during that fiscal year and are also affected by variables outside the administration of the program.

The number of instances in which protection was refused by witnesses this year was 15, which is a slight increase from last year's figure. The main reasons cited by witnesses for refusing to enter the Program were: numerous restrictions and an unwillingness to relocate.

The number of Canadian witnesses who requested voluntary termination increased from 16 to 21 this year. There were 7 cases of involuntary termination which were reported as per section 9 of the Act. The cases all involved serious breaches of security by the witnesses and their participation in the Program was terminated following written notices.

No witness was refused admission to the Program by the RCMP pursuant to section 10 of the Act. The RCMP has accepted witnesses into the Program from foreign countries.

There were 3 civil litigations filed against the RCMP and/or complaint filed with the Commission for Public Complaints against the RCMP in relation to the Program during the last fiscal year.

This is the last year that this format will be used. For 2006-2007, the RCMP will present to Parliament a more in depth report which will reflect a more accurate cost of the Program.

Report of the number of cases for the program		
Number of	2005 - 2006	2004 - 2005
Total Number of Cases	53	86
Secure identity changes	54	35
Relocation outside province of origin	22	25
Relocation within province of origin	9	15
Voluntary Terminations	21	16
Involuntary Terminations	7	8
Refusal of protection by witnesses	15	11
Instance of failure of protection caused by RCMP	0	0
Lawsuits filed in court or complaints with the Commission for public Complaints against the RCMP in relation to the program	3	3
Total Cost of the Program	\$1,932,761.16	\$2,656,287.51