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ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Statement by:
The Honourable Bev Busson

Tuesday, June 7, 2022

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Hon. Bev Busson: Honourable senators, I rise today to note that May 23, 2023, will mark the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. It is a significant moment, as the story of our nation cannot be told without the contribution of its national police force.

Spoiler alert: I was a member of the first class of female constables to be sworn in to the RCMP in 1974 and became the RCMP's first female commissioner in 2006. The RCMP now includes specialized teams investigating everything from child sexual exploitation and international organized crime to threats to our national security.

Recently, at the request of the International Criminal Court, the RCMP deployed 10 officers to investigate crimes against humanity wherever and whenever needed. Additionally, the RCMP is actively investigating allegations of war crimes committed against Ukrainians with the goal of securing statements and evidence from Ukrainians fleeing the war.

From a human resources perspective, the RCMP is now approximately 25% female. The leadership cadre has recently reached gender parity.

Last year, 22% of the promotions were women. Indigenous regular members and public service employees exceed the Canadian standard workforce rates, and new hires from visible minority groups are increasing.

The profession of policing is difficult, increasingly complicated and exponentially challenging. In our streets, life-changing decisions are often made at a moment's notice. We need to support them.

The trajectory of any 150-year-long story is not going to be a straight line. It comes with chapters that reflect many accomplishments, as well as chapters that need to be acknowledged and actively learned from. Last September, I witnessed an event that reflected both.

At Daajing Giids, formerly Queen Charlotte RCMP Detachment on Haida Gwaii, I saw reconciliation in action. At the detachment there, a traditional potlatch was held — in combination with about 400 community members — culminating in the raising of the Haida flag and a traditional Haida pole, created by a local master carver. It features a Haida guardian, graced with beautiful traditional Haida iconography, but also including pink fingernails to embody diversity and a stetson to represent the RCMP. It is a powerful symbol of the strength and possibilities of true reconciliation to everyone who has seen it.

The one hundred fiftieth anniversary in 2023 is an opportunity to celebrate the tangible action being taken on the path to becoming a more modern, diverse, inclusive and trusted policing organization. I encourage my honourable colleagues to seek out and support these positive efforts of the RCMP in communities across this land.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to the approximately 300 RCMP members who have lost their lives in the line of duty. We thank them and their families for their sacrifice and service to the people of Canada.

Thank you, *háv'aa*
