BRITISH COLUMBIA POLICE COMMISSION

Report on the Riot that occurred in Vancouver on June 14-15, 1994

TOBER, 1994
BRITISH COLUMBIA POLICE COMMISSION

REPORT ON THE RIOT
THAT OCCURRED IN VANCOUVER
ON JUNE 14-15, 1994

October, 1994
TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ........................................................................................................ 1

PREFACE: PUTTING THE RIOT INTO PERSPECTIVE .......................................................... 3

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION .............................................................................................. 5

PART TWO: SEQUENCE OF EVENTS ON JUNE 14-15, 1994 ............................................. 7

A. SETTING THE SCENE .................................................................................................... 7
B. THE PUBLIC IN THE EARLY EVENING ......................................................................... 9
C. AFTER THE GAME ......................................................................................................... 10
D. THE FLASH POINT ......................................................................................................... 13
E. THE AFTERMATH ......................................................................................................... 22

PART THREE: COULD THE RIOT HAVE BEEN PREVENTED? ............................................. 24

A. PLANNING AND CROWD CONTROL ........................................................................... 25
   1. Police Planning .......................................................................................................... 25
   2. Planning by Other Agencies and Crowd Control ...................................................... 28
   3. Recommendations Relating to Planning .................................................................. 32
B. ROLE OF ALCOHOL ....................................................................................................... 33
   1. Consumption of Alcohol at the P.N.E. ..................................................................... 33
   2. Overconsumption in the Bars and Restaurants Downtown ....................................... 35
   3. Consumption and Transportation on SkyTrain ......................................................... 37
   4. Consumption on the Streets ...................................................................................... 38
   5. Recommendations Relating to Alcohol Consumption .............................................. 38
C. ROLE OF THE MEDIA ..................................................................................................... 40
   1. Role of the Media in Enhancing the Excitement ....................................................... 40
   2. Role of the Media on the 14th .................................................................................. 41
   3. Location of Cameras ................................................................................................ 42
   4. Role of the Media in the Aftermath .......................................................................... 44
   5. Recommendations Relating to the Media ................................................................. 45

PART FOUR: POLICE RESPONSE ON THE 14TH ............................................................... 46

A. POLICE DEPLOYMENT .................................................................................................. 46
B. POLICE RESPONSE AND TACTICS ............................................................................ 47
   1. Discussion .................................................................................................................. 47
C. ESCALATION OF POLICE RESPONSE ....................................................................... 50
   1. Reading The Riot Act ............................................................................................... 50
2. Was the Use of Tear Gas Necessary? .................................................. 53
3. Warning about the Use of Tear Gas .................................................... 54
4. Dispersal Routes after the Use of Tear Gas ......................................... 56
D. COMMUNICATION .................................................................................... 57
  1. Overview of Normal Communications ................................................ 57
  2. Communications on June 14th-15th .................................................... 58
  3. Recommendations Relating to Communication .................................. 60
E. POLICE TRAINING .................................................................................... 61
  1. Regular Officers ................................................................................... 61
  2. Crowd Control Unit and the R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop ..................... 61
  3. Recommendations Relating to Training .............................................. 62
F. EQUIPMENT ............................................................................................... 63
  1. Regular Officers ................................................................................... 63
  2. The Vancouver Crowd Control Unit ................................................... 63
  3. Extra Equipment on Hand for June 14th ........................................... 64
  4. Discussion of Specific Equipment ....................................................... 65
    a. Pepper Spray (Oleoresin Capsicum-Capstun) .................................. 65
    b. Tear Gas .......................................................................................... 65
    c. Arwen 37 Anti Riot Weapon ............................................................ 66
    d. Batons ............................................................................................. 67
    e. Helicopter ......................................................................................... 68
    f. Dogs ............................................................................................... 68
  5. Equipment/Animals Not Used .............................................................. 69
    a. Water Cannons and Fire Hoses ....................................................... 69
    b. Horses ............................................................................................. 69
  6. Recommendations Relating to Equipment .......................................... 70
G. CONCLUSIONS ON POLICE RESPONSE ............................................... 71

PART FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS .......................... 73

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS ........................................................................ 74

BIBLIOGRAPHY ................................................................................................. 79

APPENDIX A - MAPS ....................................................................................... 93

APPENDIX B - CONTRIBUTORS ......................................................................... 99
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report, prepared pursuant to an order by the Attorney General, examines the disturbances that occurred after the 7th game of the Stanley Cup Playoffs in Vancouver on June 14, 1994. The report finds that the atmosphere was tense downtown, even during the afternoon prior to the game. The crowd that gathered was composed primarily of young people. As the evening wore on, particularly after the game, the energy of many of those young people seemed to become negative and aggressive. After about 8:00 p.m., police decided to exercise restraint by not intervening in activities unless they were dangerous or threatening, in order not to provoke the volatile crowd. Under the circumstances, this was a sound decision, but it resulted in the crowd becoming less and less manageable as the evening progressed. We support the decision of the Vancouver Police Department to deploy the Crowd Control Unit when they did, since the crowd's hostility towards police and the possibility of serious damage had left them no other choice. It is our opinion that, under the circumstances, the use of tear gas by the Vancouver Police Department Crowd Control Unit and by the R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop was appropriate.

Alcohol was a significant contributing factor to the riot. A number of young people emerged as instigators of destructive and aggressive acts, and because of a "crowd mentality" clouded by alcohol, the loss of the game was used as an excuse for many in the crowd to act up. A greater effort needs to be made by the entire community to prevent a similar occurrence in the future and we have made suggestions as to how this might be done, particularly in relation to the use of alcohol. In general, police planning for the event, including the possibility of disturbances, was very thorough. However, in our opinion, more attention to traffic control by police in the very early evening may have helped avert the congestion that resulted from an unruly parade of vehicles down Georgia Street. Once this parade was well underway, police action could not curtail it without provoking the crowd.

In general, police response on the evening was appropriate under the circumstances. However, poor communication (both among police themselves and between police and the public) and a lack of training and experience in dealing with a large hostile crowd (on the part of regular uniform police officers) contributed to confusion, particularly after tear gas was used. We have accordingly made recommendations concerning various aspects of police response. We are confident that most of the problems we have identified will also be identified by the police in their internal review of police actions that evening.

Even if all the recommendations in this report are followed, we cannot guarantee that riots will not occur in the future in this city. Crowd behaviour is wildly unpredictable in the best of circumstances and the hype that follows major sporting events in this country, combined with a multimillion dollar marketing interest in linking alcohol and sports, is beyond the control of any local jurisdiction, no matter how well coordinated. This means that both luck and constant vigilance and coordination on the part of local authorities (including but not limited to police) will be necessary if we are to avoid such events in the
future. However, we believe that these recommendations will help in avoiding other riots and, if any occur, in dealing with them in the best possible way.
PREFACE: PUTTING THE RIOT INTO PERSPECTIVE

"Vancouver had another...riot...

"It was caused by a milling, shouting, bottle-hurling mob estimated at more than 3,000 which surged up and down Georgia Street for more than four hours.

"They smashed store windows, tore down flags from hotel marquees, ripped down traffic and bus stop signs—and turned the street into shambles...

"The first serious moment occurred about 10 p.m. when the crowd filled in Georgia Street between Granville and Seymour, trapping a number of policemen...."¹

Sound familiar? The above quotes were not about the Stanley Cup Riot that occurred in Vancouver in 1994, but about the Grey Cup riot that occurred in this city in 1966. With few changes, the above copy, found in the Vancouver Province in November 1966, could easily have been written to cover the Stanley Cup Riot almost 28 years later. We chose to preface our report with the quote because we think it important that the riot be placed in perspective. In the aftermath that followed the June riot, there was a lot of blaming and finger pointing. Most fingers pointed at the actions of one or both of two groups: the police and the young people involved in the melee. This report is not about fixing blame on the part of either. This report details and analyses the planning that took place prior to the riot, describes and analyses the events of the night of the riot and the factors that contributed to it, and most importantly, determines if there are any lessons to be learned from the experience.

We have examined both the planning and the actions of the police that night. Where suggestions are made, they are meant to be constructive. We recognize that the evening of June 14th was intensely frightening and difficult for those who experienced the mindless hostility of the crowd first hand and who could not communicate with supervisors and dispatchers. The actions of police are easy to examine in the confines of an office, with hindsight. While we cannot fully appreciate the experiences of those on duty that evening, we have gained a measure of understanding by listening to them.

As for the actions of the young people, many of whom will emerge from the evening with criminal records, we think it is important to point out (for those who use the riot as evidence of the increasing lawlessness of today's society) that the Grey Cup rioters of 1966 are now in their late

forties. Many of them are, no doubt, among the respectable citizens of Vancouver who were shocked and dismayed by the events of June 14, 1994.

If there are lessons to be learned from the night of June 14, let us learn them, but let us not overreact.
PART ONE

INTRODUCTION
PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

The following is one of several reports that will be generated by different agencies examining aspects of the riot that occurred in Vancouver on June 14th and 15th, 1994. Major reports are expected to be produced by the Vancouver Police Department and the City of Vancouver. Those reports will examine, respectively, police actions on the night in question and actions the City of Vancouver might take to prevent a similar occurrence.

This report was requested by Attorney General Colin Gabelmann, pursuant to the Police Act in general and section 44 of that Act in particular. By order, the Attorney General requested the Police Commission to:

"study, investigate and prepare a report on law enforcement and crime prevention as pertaining to the riots which occurred in the city of Vancouver on June 14 and 15, 1994, following the seventh game of the Stanley Cup final.

"In considering these law enforcement matters, the Commission should consider such other matters as it deems appropriate which affected or might have affected crowd control or police response during the riots."

There may be areas in which the content and analysis in this report overlap with that in other reports. This is unavoidable. There will be areas touched on in this report that are more fully discussed and analyzed in others. Policy makers, planners and the general public will be well served by having several reports from different perspectives.

This report was prepared through:

- interviews with police officers on duty that night;
- interviews with people who were downtown that night, including people working downtown;
- interviews with employees of the Vancouver Fire Dept., B.C. Transit, City of Vancouver, the Provincial Government, and other agencies;
- a review of police documentation;
- a review of documentation from other public agencies;

---

2 We have used the term “riot” throughout the report in its ordinary dictionary meaning, not in its legal meaning. A short discussion on the legal requirements for a riot is contained elsewhere in this report.
viewing video footage obtained from media and police video cameras;

a review of written comments about the riot from members of the public. Some of these were unsolicited and others came about as a result of newspaper advertisements published by the Commission asking for such comments. Some of these comments are interspersed throughout the report.3

In addition, some written material was used as reference material, and a bibliography is appended to the report. The parameters of the report did not allow for a study of the various approaches to crowd control used by other jurisdictions.

The report is broken into five parts, including this introduction. The second part sets out a synopsis of events on June 14th and 15th. The third part examines whether the riot could have been prevented. That part examines planning and crowd management, the role of alcohol and the role of the media as factors that contributed to the disturbance. Recommendations are made in all these areas. The fourth part examines police response during the evening, including deployment, tactics, training, communications and equipment. Again, recommendations are made in these areas as well. The fifth and final part sets out conclusions and a summary of recommendations.

---

3 About 90 letters were received. More than half the letter writers supported police action; various concerns were indicated, including the open and public use of alcohol or drugs as contributing factors and the use of force by police. Other letters gave personal reports of attempts to seek safety while the riot was taking place or general comments and suggestions with respect to future events.
PART TWO

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS ON JUNE 14-15, 1994
PART TWO: SEQUENCE OF EVENTS ON JUNE 14-15, 1994

A. SETTING THE SCENE

June 14, 1994 was the date scheduled for the seventh and final game of the Stanley Cup Hockey Playoffs between the Vancouver Canucks and the New York Rangers. The series was tied three games to three. Because the Vancouver Canucks were somewhat of an "underdog" team going into the playoffs, public interest in the outcome of the series mounted steadily throughout the playoffs. The sixth game had been played in Vancouver, and the final one was to be played in New York, scheduled to be televised beginning at 5:00 p.m. Vancouver time.

Both the media and the police expected that Robson Street would be the focal point of the gathering of people after the game on the 14th. Robson Street is a lively, crowded street in the downtown area of Vancouver. On any given evening, shops, coffee houses, bars and restaurants will all be open for business, the streets alive with pedestrians and vehicles, many filled with young people. Robson Street was the site of the gathering following the sixth game of the playoffs on June 11th, the Saturday evening prior to the Tuesday on which the riot occurred. On that evening, media reports described a large "family-oriented" crowd of Canucks' fans downtown on Robson Street to celebrate the victory. They described the atmosphere that night as one of a big happy party. Three days later, Robson Street was the site of another large gathering that disintegrated into a riot.

Early Tuesday morning, television crews set up fixed camera locations at the corner of Robson and Thurlow Streets (1100 block) and in the 800 block of Robson. During the day and early evening, the media invited people to join the celebration on Robson Street. Beginning at around noon, drinking establishments and restaurants downtown, particularly on Robson Street, Granville Street and Denman Street, began to fill with patrons wanting to watch the game. For example, the Sports Bar on Robson Street was filled at 11 a.m. A senior Vancouver Police Department officer who walked along Robson in the early afternoon reported later that he sensed a different mood in the people in the street than he had sensed in the early afternoon of the previous Saturday.

Police assigned two members to take video footage of the crowds from observation posts in both the 1100 block (Robson and Thurlow) and the 1400 block of Robson Street.
When the game started at 5:00 p.m., the streets were relatively quiet. The Operational Command Centre, at 312 Main Street, was activated when the game began. The Command Centre consisted of personnel from the Vancouver Police Department and the R.C.M.P. personnel, as well as representatives from the Vancouver Fire Department, Emergency Health Services, B.C. Transit and the City of Vancouver Engineering and Emergency Planning Departments.

As the evening began, the Vancouver Police Department had eight uniformed squads (each with one supervisor and ten constables) on duty. Each squad started work at 6:00 p.m. that evening. The plan called for these eight squads to be deployed, one to a block, along Robson Street from the 1000 block to the 1700 block. Police had information leading them to believe that street gangs were going to cause trouble that evening, as well as an anonymous tip that stores on Robson Street would be looted. As a result, the police squads were deployed in a deliberately visible fashion along Robson Street. These squads were in addition to the regularly scheduled officers on duty downtown that evening—about 30 officers. There were also two squads of traffic enforcement officers (one squad of twelve officers plus a supervisor and the other of fourteen officers plus a supervisor) who started their shifts at 4:00 p.m. Six of these officers were assigned to traffic duties in the area of the P.N.E. and the remainder were assigned to the downtown core. Thirteen police members on bicycles also started their shifts in the downtown area at 4:00 p.m. It was contemplated that four of these would escort Emergency Health Services (ambulance) personnel.

Furthermore, there were five squads of regular uniformed police officers (55 officers, including supervisors) scheduled to come on duty at 8:00 p.m. as relief for the squads on Robson Street. Some of these were called out earlier than 8:00 p.m. when the nature of the crowd became apparent.

Members of the Crowd Control Unit of the Vancouver Police Department, trained in crowd control methods and equipment, assembled at the Vancouver Police Department at 6:00 p.m. and were briefed by the Field Commander. The unit was on standby at the Robson Street Media Centre (Robson and Hornby) by 7:00 p.m. On that evening, the Crowd Control Unit had 38 members, including two Staff Sergeants and two Inspectors. One of these Inspectors moved to the location of the R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop to coordinate their efforts, so effectively there were 37 members of the Crowd Control Unit. The other Inspector remained with the unit to control its

---

4 The supervisors were all Non-Commissioned Officers (N.C.O.s), either Corporals, Sergeants or Staff Sergeants.
5 The Field Commander that evening was an Inspector. His duties, according to the Operational Plan, were to “ensure that the appropriate resources are deployed (on duty and callout) to ensure the peace is maintained.”
movements. The unit also included two members of the Emergency Response Team who were equipped with and trained in the use of the Arwen 37 Riot Control Weapon System\(^6\) and four other members of the Emergency Response Team equipped with large canisters of O.C. spray\(^7\) and 9 mm. pistols (the normal weapon for E.R.T. members).

The 57 members of the “E” Division R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop were on standby at the West End Community Centre. This team included seven police dog handlers and their dogs. The operational plan called for this troop to be used as relief for the Crowd Control Unit if necessary.

There were also 60 reserve constables on duty in the early evening.\(^8\) The duties of the reserve constables that evening included closing Robson Street from Seymour to Denman to all vehicular traffic.

As the game ended, there were over 200 regular police members on duty throughout the downtown area, and 60 reserve members.

**B. THE PUBLIC IN THE EARLY EVENING**

While the game was on, many people watched it in their homes. Most of the bars and restaurants downtown that were equipped with televisions were filled with patrons. We do not know how many organized showings of the game there were downtown. We know that the Vogue and Plaza Theatres on Granville Street both broadcast the game to sellout crowds. Together, upwards of 2,000 people watched the game in those two theatres.

There were, in addition, a number of non hockey-related activities downtown that evening, many of them common occurrences. For example, theatres had regular showings of movies, there were tourists downtown, restaurants were operating as usual, and a high school graduation involving approximately 1500 people took place at the Orpheum Theatre (Seymour and Smithe).

More than 8,300 people watched the game on a wide-screen at the Coliseum at the Pacific National Exhibition grounds, approximately eight kilometres from the downtown area. This event was established as a charity fund-raiser.\(^9\) The admission price was $5.00, seating was unreserved

---

\(^6\) A description and discussion of the Arwen 37 follows later in this report.

\(^7\) Oleoresin Capsicum ("pepper spray") will be discussed later in this report.

\(^8\) Reserve constables are men and women who have received some police training but are not full time police officers. Their duties are generally related to traffic and crowd supervision at special events.

\(^9\) The profit from ticket sales went to the Vancouver Food Bank.
and patrons were not checked for possession of alcohol or drugs as they entered. Beer was sold from the concession. There were no Vancouver Police Department police officers on duty at the Coliseum but there were 61 Ushering/Security staff on duty. As the hockey game moved through the second and third periods, security staff were required to remove people from the ice and deal with an increasing number of fights in the crowd. Approximately 40 people were evicted from the premises for misbehaviour during the broadcast of the game.

The streets were relatively quiet during the game but there were indications of what was to come: Police officers reported an unusually large number of groups of young people on Granville Mall carrying portable stereos and listening to loud music--not the hockey game--and a member of the public states that he was driving along Burrard during the break between the second and third periods when he was nearly broadsided at the intersection of Robson and Burrard by a car full of partying young people who had gone through the intersection against a red light.

C. AFTER THE GAME

The game ended, in defeat for the Vancouver Canucks, at approximately 7:30 p.m. As people left the P.N.E. in disappointment, several fights broke out and some garbage cans were knocked over. A beater car was flipped over by its owner and it rolled into Renfrew Street and hit another car. A stabbing, which later proved to be false, was also reported to Emergency 911. In response to these reports, three Vancouver Police squads (about 30 officers) were at the P.N.E. within minutes.10

Downtown on Georgia Street, between Seymour and Denman, a spontaneous and disorganized "parade" of vehicles began after the game ended and continued, in a fashion, for several hours. Young people were seen riding on the hoods of cars, leaning out of windows, standing up through sun roofs and sitting on the backs of vehicles. Some were flag waving, showing Canucks signs and openly consuming alcohol. The "parade" proceeded without heed to traffic control signals. At the start of this "parade," police attempted to control it, but by 8:00 p.m., when they found that neither the vehicle drivers nor throngs of pedestrians were responding to their intervention, the decision was made to take no overt action to stop the parade and to not interfere with the actions of the people participating in it.

10 Two additional squads were sent a few minutes after the first three squads, but they were recalled to the downtown area while enroute when it became apparent that they would not be needed at the P.N.E.
People began to flood downtown on buses and on the SkyTrain. Some were intoxicated when they boarded and some were openly drinking while on board the SkyTrain. A member of the public who boarded the SkyTrain headed for Vancouver at Edmonds station shortly after the game ended reports as follows:

"It was immediately apparent to me that many on board—particularly young males in various states of inebriation—were not headed for the downtown area to celebrate. This impression was formed based mainly on what I saw and heard.

The train was full of these people by the time it reached Edmonds, so it was obvious they had boarded in either Surrey or New Westminster. Many were carrying bags, boxes or sixpacks of beer and many were openly drinking. Besides being abusive to the few passengers who were sober, I overheard several drunk young men say how 'pissed off' they were with the Canucks losing and how they intended to 'trash something' when they got downtown."

Robson Street, particularly the intersection of Robson and Thurlow, steadily filled with people from the time the game ended. Media cameras were a significant presence downtown that evening, particularly at that intersection. A review of the video footage reveals a crowd composed almost entirely of teenagers and young adults, most of whom were male. The atmosphere on the streets was exuberant, tense and a little rough, but generally under control prior to 8:00 p.m.: A few fist fights show up on the video cameras, as well as open drinking of alcohol, "body-slamming"—a type of so-called dance where participants throw their entire bodies into one another 11—and "body surfing" —where a person is passed above the crowd.

Video tapes recorded that evening show the loud energetic crowd growing progressively more unruly as darkness falls: young men climbing up street signs and power poles and on to the tops of buildings; fist fights; fireworks being set off in the crowd; alcohol being openly consumed; and objects of all kinds being thrown about. The video tapes also show that although the crowd as a whole was unruly, some members of it acted as "peace-keepers" by breaking up fights between others when they occurred. A member of the public describes what he saw there at 9:00 p.m. that evening:

"After the loss in game 7, we walked to Robson and Thurlow at approximately 9:00. On our arrival, we immediately noticed a different mood in the people that had gathered. People showed anger and frustration towards their neighbour whom they had rejoiced with 72 hours earlier. We felt very uneasy about being there and did not feel safe. We had the feeling it might erupt..."

11 Body slamming can often provoke fist fights when someone gets "slammed" inadvertently.
The crowd was packed so tightly together that it was very difficult for police to move through it. Police report that around 8:00 p.m. it became apparent that many were becoming hostile towards them. The Inspector who was acting as Field Commander decided at that time that attempting to enforce the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act* and to break up fights would provoke greater hostility towards the police. From that time on, it appears that police did not intervene to stop activities in the crowd unless they were dangerous or threatening. They did intervene around 8:00 p.m., when more than 20 people were rocking a white panel truck. A young man smashing the Starbucks' sign at the intersection of Robson and Thurlow was arrested at 8:59 p.m. and people were removed from an awning onto which they had climbed.

One member of the public who was at the corner of Robson and Thurlow on June 14th following the hockey game states that "There were a few rowdies and a lot of commotion, but otherwise the crowd was extremely well behaved and very civil." This opinion appears to be the minority view of what was taking place downtown that evening and is not borne out by a review of the video tapes. Our examination shows that some of the crowd that gathered downtown after the game were looking for trouble, whereas others were there just waiting for something to happen.

The rowdiness was not confined to the intersection of Robson and Thurlow Streets; intentionally set fires had been reported downtown as early as 8:15 p.m. Just prior to 9:00 p.m., a stabbing was reported at Earl's restaurant downtown. A fire was reported at Smithe and Granville at 9:23 p.m., and there were numerous calls of fights and vehicles being overturned in the south lane of the 1100 block of Robson Street at 9:40 p.m. Eaton's store, on Granville between Robson and Georgia, had its first window broken at 9:45 p.m. Out of consideration for their safety, the reserve police officers doing traffic duties were called off the street around 9:30 p.m.

One member of the public described what he saw at 8:30 p.m. that evening:

"*We got downtown by 8:30, and there were lots of people downtown already. People were chanting 'Rangers Suck' and 'Fuck you, Rangers, Fuck you!' ... The first time I saw trouble was on Granville as we came up to Robson. One guy was climbing on another guy's shoulders, and he grabbed a Canada flag that was hanging from Eaton's. He almost got it down all the way, but the last part tore. He dropped to the ground and 4 cops were on him instantly...."*

One young woman reported that she was downtown on Robson Street but left for home around 9:00 p.m. because of the "bad vibes." On her way home, she passed three young men, carrying

---

This report turned out to have been unfounded.
hockey sticks and talking about "the riot." This was almost an hour before the major disturbance started.

A newspaper reporter stated:

"The Night We Disgraced Ourselves began, for me, at 9:30 p.m. as I was walking along Granville Street. Two girls, about 14, trudged by and one of them, without breaking step, hurled a beer bottle to the pavement. They didn't look happy, they didn't look mad; she just smashed the thing without any look at all on her face and they kept trudging."13

D. THE FLASH POINT14

In our opinion, the downtown area was volatile prior to 10:00 p.m. and was reaching a point at which it could be easily ignited. Around 10:00 p.m., the atmosphere seemed to reach a "flash point" of sorts. This was most evident at the intersection of Robson and Thurlow because that was the location of the biggest crowd of people at that time. Just prior to 10:00 p.m., videos show the crowd packed into the intersection--the noise level was extremely high. Around 10:00 p.m., a young man successfully walked across the guide lines supporting the trolley wires. A second man, attempting to retrieve a jacket that had been thrown onto the wires, fell to the ground and needed medical assistance. Emergency Health Services personnel on bicycles, accompanied by two Vancouver Police Department officers on bicycles, moved through the crowded intersection; estimates are that from 4,000 to 6,000 people were in the intersection at that time. Other police officers formed a barrier around the ambulance personnel, trying to keep the crowd back so that the injured person could be attended to. Members of the crowd were pushing each other, some trying to help the police and some directing their energies against the police. Some police officers pushed back.

Ambulance attendants treated the injured man. An ambulance arrived at the intersection with its lights and sirens on, followed by a second one minutes later. Police had to remove several young men who were climbing on the bumpers of one of the ambulances. Both ambulances departed just after 10:15 p.m. Videos show a large group of young men banging their hands on the side of the ambulance as it departed. While police were attempting to get the second ambulance out of the

14 We used the term "flash point" because its ordinary dictionary meaning describes the atmosphere. There is one theory of riot behaviour, referred to as the "flashpoint" theory. See Waddington, David, Contemporary Issues in Public Disorder: A Comparative and Historical Approach, Routledge. (1994) and Waddington, David et al., Flashpoints: Studies in public disorder, Routledge. (1992). Our use of the term does not necessarily signal our adoption of the flashpoints theory of disorder over other theories.
intersection, the Command Centre received two requests from a Sergeant on duty in the
intersection to send the Crowd Control Unit to the intersection; the second request was "Code
3." During this time, the Communications Centre also received at least one 911 call stating
that a group of officers were surrounded at the intersection of Robson and Thurlow and needed
help. As a result of the calls, the Superintendent in charge of operations for the evening made the
decision to mobilize the Crowd Control Unit at 10:09 p.m. He was unable to communicate this
decision to the officers in the intersection at Thurlow and Robson; there was too much noise for
the officers to hear their radios.

Police state that after the ambulances left, they became targets of the crowd's hostility and had
bottles and other objects thrown at them. There were, at this time, approximately 25 regular
uniformed Vancouver Police Officers grouped on the north east corner of the intersection. One
of the Staff Sergeants on duty there, unaware of the deployment of the Crowd Control Unit,
decided to assert control over the crowd and clear the intersection by ordering the members to
move in formation from Starbucks (on the northeast corner) into the centre of the intersection.
The officers were successful in clearing the intersection in about ten seconds. As the officers in
the intersection cleared the intersection, they did not know that the Crowd Control Unit was
coming to their assistance.

A member of the public who was in the intersection at the time describes what he saw as follows:

"I sensed serious trouble as I watched the ambulance move sloth-like towards the fallen man
while 'festive party-goers' beat on the side of the vehicle. 'I give it ten minutes' I stated, hinting
at the impending release of the Crowd Control Unit. I was wrong—it took less than two and a
half minutes. I climbed up a rail for a better look and witnessed the genesis of the Robson Street
riots."

The Crowd Control Unit, whose members were equipped with helmets with face shields, batons
and shields, came from the Robson Law Court staging area and marched along Smithe across
Burrard to Thurlow. Accompanied by an arrest team, it moved north on Thurlow to the
intersection of Robson and Thurlow. The Unit reports that people ignored repeated orders to
move. Members of the Unit used O.C. spray to move people off the street in order to allow the

---

15 A police term denoting emergency.
16 These requests were followed closely by a request from another police officer in the intersection for the Crowd
Control Unit and two repeats of the first request from the Sergeant, but the Crowd Control Unit had by then been
mobilized. It had not yet reached the intersection.
17 An arrest team accompanies a tactical troop to protect its flanks and make arrests. The arrest team was
equipped with riot gear and gas masks, and was made up of one squad of officers (an NCO and 10 officers).
Unit to advance along Thurlow. A member of the public describes the arrival of the Crowd Control Unit at the intersection:

"We stood in stunned silence while we watched a formation of about fifty police in full riot gear take a strategic position in the intersection. Many people backed off. Others obviously saw this as their cue to lash out. And lash out they did. Police Officers were pelted with rocks and bottles; a window shattered beside us announcing our cue to move to a safer vantage point. Two young girls in their early teens passed us as we walked. Their chant was a commentary on the atmosphere, attitude and crowd mentality—'Kill the pigs! Kill the pigs!'"

Upon the arrival of the Crowd Control Unit, the approximately 25 regular police members on duty in the intersection moved quickly behind the protective cover of the unit and cleared people away from the rear of the unit.

The Crowd Control Unit separated into two sections at Robson and Thurlow. Half the unit, accompanied by the two members of the Emergency Response Team equipped with Arwen 37 weapons, faced towards Denman Street, covering the full width of Robson Street, and the other half faced towards Granville Street, also covering the full width of Robson. The other four E.R.T. members, the arrest team accompanying the Crowd Control Unit, and the regular police officers who had been on duty in the intersection stationed themselves on Thurlow Street on both sides of Robson.

At approximately 10:25 p.m., the Staff Sergeant with the Crowd Control Unit broadcast a warning over a hand held loud hailer that tear gas would be used if the crowd did not disperse. It is doubtful whether many in the crowd heard or understood the announcements because of the high noise level and the ineffectiveness of the system in the circumstances.

Members of the Crowd Control Unit were then given orders, passed from person to person by word of mouth, to put on their tear gas masks. Smoke grenades was dropped in the 20-30 foot space between the Crowd Control Unit and the crowd. The donning of the tear gas masks and the dropping of the smoke bombs caused some people to move away, but the majority of the crowd stayed put and many of them continued to throw objects at members of the unit. The crowd then began to chant, "We won't go! We won't go!" over and over again.

18 The appendix contains a map that traces the route of the Crowd Control Unit.
19 Apparently the battery in the loud hailer died shortly after police began to use it, but even before the battery died it did not appear to be effective.
It must be pointed out, prior to continuing with the narrative, that the intersection of Robson and Thurlow was not the only "hot point" at this time. From our examination, it appears that throughout the downtown area from approximately 10:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., the situation was deteriorating. Prior to the use of tear gas by the Crowd Control Unit, the Communications Centre was receiving reports of windows being smashed in the 1000 block of Robson (near Burrard Street), of stores being looted on Robson Street, and of people breaking bricks and throwing them into the crowd in the 1100-1200 block of Robson. Within a space of six minutes, from 10:21 to 10:27, four rubbish fires and a vehicle fire were reported in the downtown area: the rubbish fires were reported at 860 Jervis Street, West Georgia and Hornby Street, 690 Burrard Street and 900 Howe Street, and the vehicle fire was reported at West Hastings and Seymour Street. A security patrol officer on duty that evening at the Central Branch of the Vancouver Public Library, located at 750 Burrard Street (Burrard and Robson), writes:

"After 10 p.m. a noticeable change was seen (and felt) in the crowd around the building. Several minor scuffles, arguments and other such confrontations were taking place. The crowd had definitely been changed by something or someone. The crowd was getting more restless by the minute and they also seemed to be losing their inhibitions (ex: Two young men urinating on the bench in front of our building in full view).

..."Before the Police made the decision to use tear gas we had received at least 6 to 10 beer (or other types) of bottles thrown against our front windows. A group of 5 young men were attempting to kick in our windows on the south/west corner and managed to shatter one of them. Approximately 5 minutes after the window was broken, the tear gas was used...."

At the intersection of Robson and Thurlow, just slightly before 10:30, the Crowd Control Unit was ordered to drop C.S. tear gas grenades in the space between the unit and the crowd. Some tear gas grenades were thrown or kicked back to the Crowd Control Unit and were generally ineffective. The order was then given to the gas rank to open fire with volleys of tear gas. This caused the crowd to flee. The two halves of the Crowd Control Unit slowly moved in opposite directions on Robson Street from Thurlow, firing volleys of tear gas as they advanced. One of these halves was accompanied by the arrest team, and the other moved without an arrest team. The regular police members who had been in the intersection prior to the arrival of the Crowd Control Unit and who had moved behind the members of that unit upon its arrival were unable to assist members of the unit once tear gas had been used because they were not then equipped with tear gas masks. Riot control equipment, including gas masks, was at the Number 7 Firehall

---

20 C.S. stands for o-chlorobezylidenemalononitrile. It is the type of tear gas used by police in Canada, also referred to as "mace."
(Thurlow and Smithe) but at this time most regular police officers had been unable to go to the Firehall to pick up the equipment.

At approximately the same time as the Crowd Control Unit released its first canister of tear gas, the Tactical Troop of the R.C.M.P. was mobilized. This troop had been waiting on standby at the West End Community Centre, and a Vancouver Police Department Inspector (who was technically with the Crowd Control Unit that evening) was there with the R.C.M.P. Troop, monitoring the situation by radio and cellular telephone. The Inspector who was with the unit did not know at that time that the R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop was being mobilized, because communication was impossible while wearing tear gas masks.

Because there were insufficient officers with gas masks to protect their flanks as they advanced and because the Crowd Control Unit was split up (which meant there were fewer members than ideal), each half of the unit had to use many canisters of tear gas to keep the crowd back and away from them. As a result, their tear gas supply was rapidly depleted and each portion requested resupply from the R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop. The half which was marching towards Burrard dispersed a large crowd as it marched, and had run out of tear gas by the time it reached Burrard. At that time it was pelted again with objects thrown by the crowd.

The other half of the unit, accompanied by the E.R.T. members equipped with the Arwen 37 system, moved along Robson towards Bute. The Arwen 37 is capable of firing low velocity tear gas projectiles and plastic batons. As this portion of the Crowd Control Unit moved along Robson Street, it fired tear gas projectiles at the tops of buildings to clear people from them. The unit stopped at Bute to disperse a small group throwing objects. I was then that the well-publicized Arwen shot occurred, at approximately 10:45 p.m. The man who was hit was noted by the police commander on site as a prominent agitator of the crowd. Medical assistance was called for over police radios and he was taken to hospital.

After the tear gas had been dispersed, it was necessary for all the other police officers on the street to have tear gas masks in order to be effective. Consequently, both the R.C.M.P. and the Vancouver Police Department were attempting to get this equipment to the regular uniformed officers. The Vancouver Police Department had an equipment truck ready and waiting at Firehall Number 7 but there was insufficient equipment for all regular officers on duty; entire squads arrived at the Firehall and found no riot equipment. There was some old equipment in a locked

21 The Tactical Troop was mobilized through a request from the Command Centre, relayed through the Vancouver Police Department Inspector’s cellular phone.
room at the Police Department and, after some delay (which appears to be the result of a combination of communications problems, a lost key and the general mayhem downtown) this equipment arrived at the Firehall at Nelson and Thurlow sometime after 11:00 p.m. The R.C.M.P. were attempting to get tear gas masks from Richmond, but that detachment's masks had already been sent to Surrey to help in the situation there.\textsuperscript{22} The Burnaby detachment had masks, so the R.C.M.P. helicopter was sent to pick them up, along with more tear gas and to deliver them to the Vancouver Police Department at 312 Main Street.

Many regular members of the department, who heard about the supply truck at Firehall Number 7 before the equipment ran out, were able to retrieve tear gas masks and other riot equipment. After donning the masks, they assisted the Crowd Control Unit. Once sufficient backup was obtained, the west-facing portion of the unit pushed the crowd to Jervis Street, where its tear gas ran out. The Arwen rounds also ran out at that point. The unit was stalled for a time while it waited for a resupply of both. A grocery store was looted at this intersection and bottles of ketchup and honey were thrown at the members. Several members of the unit had their helmet visors shattered by direct hits.

The R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop, along with its seven dogs, was brought by bus to Burrard Street. The Inspector in charge of the Crowd Control Unit requested that this troop be sent in to relieve one of the Crowd Control Unit segments, in order that the unit could be reunited. He was with the segment at Robson and Burrard when he made the request, but because he did not know exactly where the other half of his unit was, he could not be specific as to where the Tactical Troop should be deployed. He stated over the radio that he did not want them to come to Burrard and Robson where he was, but rather to go to where the other part of the Crowd Control Unit was. With the poor radio communications, his request was never understood and the troop arrived at Burrard and Robson.

The Tactical Troop moved along Burrard from Robson and formed a line on the south side of the intersection of Burrard and Georgia.\textsuperscript{23} Upon their arrival, the crowd directed their missiles at them. As they waited in formation, they were bombarded with stones, bricks, bottles and a piece of a barricade. One dog with the troop was knocked down as a result of being hit in the flank with a piece of broken concrete and was removed from duty.

\textsuperscript{22} Surrey was the site of a minor disturbance.
\textsuperscript{23} The Appendix contains a map that traces the route of the RCMP Tactical Troop.
The decision was made for the Tactical Troop to move east along Georgia Street. It began its movement along Georgia in an easterly direction at 10:55 p.m., deploying tear gas as it advanced. It was ordered to a halt at Howe Street because of the successful dispersal of the crowd. When it stopped moving, the crowd seemed to return. The Vancouver Police Department Inspector accompanying the troop asked it to reverse its direction on Georgia. It did so, making a wide sweep of the intersection at Howe and Georgia to disperse the crowds.

The portion of the Crowd Control Unit that was at Robson and Burrard moved east along Robson, paralleling the movement of the R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop. Both halves of the Crowd Control Units, depleted of tear gas, were subjected to barrages of flying objects—bricks, bottles and rocks—until they received a new supply of tear gas sometime after 11:30 p.m. After their supplies were replenished, the portion of the Crowd Control Unit that was then at Jervis and Robson moved east on Robson to Granville and rejoined the rest of the unit on Granville Street. Robson Street was by then a shambles. It was cleared of people, but littered with rocks, bottles and missiles of every description. Dozens of windows were smashed.

Police reinforcements were called in at 11:25 p.m. Chief Constable Canuel ordered that a "fan-out" system be implemented to call in Vancouver Police Department officers for assistance. He also spoke by telephone with Assistant Commissioner Palmer of the R.C.M.P. and asked him to supply reinforcements. The R.C.M.P. also requested that its Chilliwack Tactical Troop be mobilized.

Meanwhile, the R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop was working in organized formation with a number of Vancouver Police Department officers acting as an arrest team. The arrest team was made up primarily of officers who had originally been at the intersection of Robson and Thurlow and who were by then equipped with riot gear. The arrest team and the R.C.M.P. dogs protected the rear of the troop as it moved along Georgia, although it became separated from the arrest team and three of the dogs for a period of time. The troop moved along Georgia to just past Bute, turned about face on Georgia, turned right on Bute and proceeded along that street for a few feet. The members stopped there, received additional tear gas from the Burnaby detachment, drank some water, cleaned their masks and took a short break. This break allowed the arrest team to catch

24 After the initial dispersement of the crowd between 10:30 and 11:00 p.m., large crowds did not return to that portion of Robson Street that evening.
25 The fan-out system involves a system of phoning through the ranks where each level of supervisory personnel is responsible for calling, at home, the people he or she directly supervises.
26 This Unit was never deployed because the situation was under control prior to its arrival.
27 The wearing of gas masks and use of gas increases thirst.
up with the troop. While the members of the troop were taking a break they report that they were under a constant barrage of flying objects, and tear gas continued to be used to keep the crowds away. When it resumed movement, the troop moved along Robson, reaching the 1400 block of Robson around 1:30 a.m.

Throughout the downtown area between 11:00 p.m. and 12:00 a.m., the Vancouver Police Department Communications Centre received numerous reports of fights, windows being smashed and stores being looted. Numerous calls for medical assistance were also received; fire trucks responded, but Emergency Health Services personnel did not because they had no tear gas equipment and it was too dangerous to travel into the area without police escort. Firefighters were surprised by tear gas when they responded to some calls, and the hostilities of the crowd were directed at them:

"Responded to a medical call at Georgia & Howe. Enroute we were caught in traffic at Robson & Howe and assaulted for being the 'Pigs' friends. Then the tear gas caused eye & throat irritation."

Some police personnel were unable to assist other members because they did not have tear gas equipment; the location of this equipment was conveyed to them by word of mouth by other officers on the street. Some members became separated from their squads and supervisors and joined other squads and supervisors. Burglar alarms were going off all over the downtown area. People reported taking refuge in restaurants and hotel lobbies—many of these people were suffering from tear gas exposure. St Paul's hospital entered what is referred to as a "Code Orange" state at 10:30 p.m. The large number of people suffering the effects of tear gas or pepper spray prompted the hospital to place three large buckets of water and stacks of towels outside the hospital to allow people to wash their faces.

Video footage shows the energy in the crowd. For example, one video clip shows two young men assisting a young woman, presumably the girlfriend of one of the men, who is suffering from tear gas. They are running along the street and the young man shouts excitedly to the young woman as he grabs her: "That's tear gas! You wanted to get in a party--that's what a party feels like!"

People complained about having nowhere to escape to after the tear gas was deployed:

28 A hospital term denoting a high number of emergency patients.
29 The hospital continued in a Code Orange state until about 4:00 a.m.
"... while the riot squad was trying to disperse the crowd at Robson and Thurlow, uniformed officers were allowing the crowds access to Robson westbound at the other end of the same block. These people may have walked unsuspectingly into a situation in which they became trapped...."

"... we walked back to the Art Gallery by Robson and we got around the corner and started walking through the people down Robson. Then three things happened in the time span of about 3 seconds. I saw the police in riot gear and looked to my roommate to say, "Look at the cops." He looked at me to say, "Do you smell that?" Then we both hit the tear gas cloud.

I thought that tear gas was always a thick cloudy smoke, but the stuff that hit us was completely invisible. We had no idea it was coming. No warning to clear the area, no riot act warning, no nothing. My eyes were suddenly burning, and it hurt to breath. We turned around and walked back, holding our breath. I took a breath after about 10 steps, and it still burned my lungs...."

It was possible, in the confusion, for people to feel themselves caught between advancing portions of the Crowd Control Unit and the R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop. This could have easily occurred when the Tactical Troop was moving along Georgia and the Crowd Control Unit along Robson.

Some angry members of the crowd were directing their hostilities towards police, some were breaking windows and looting stores, and others were engaged in wanton damage to anything in sight, including private vehicles. One young woman reports parking her car at Seymour and Robson because of the crowds downtown and returning to it shortly after midnight:

"I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw my car, a 1990 Nissan Pulsar which I just purchased on April 18th. It was extensively vandalized—to the tune of approximately $8000. Worse than that, the behaviour and reaction of the young boys around us was incomprehensible. 'Is that your car? What a good fuckin' number they did on that car, eh?' They were coming up to me, pointing and laughing and clapping. One kid on a bike came by and said, 'Is that your car? Yeah, I saw about ten kids do that to your car. Pretty fuckin' unreal, eh? Pretty fuckin' funny.'

B.C. Transit made the decision to close the transit system downtown. SkyTrain service from the Stadium to the Waterfront (Granville, Burrard and Waterfront stations) and some bus service was suspended around midnight. This decision was made because Transit drivers could not drive into tear gas, there were legitimate concerns for their safety and some of the bus routes were blocked. As for SkyTrain, Transit officials noted that some of the unruly crowd were starting to damage the Burrard Street Station and some broke windows in a B.C. Transit Security vehicle at the scene. SeaBus kept running, but access to it was monitored by Transit Security officers who
would not allow those carrying liquor or stolen property to board. The suspension of transit meant that many people who wanted to leave the downtown core found it difficult to do so.

R.C.M.P. members and extra Vancouver Police Department members began to arrive at 312 Main Street for deployment between 11:30 and 12:00 p.m. Many of the R.C.M.P. members had, after being called, reported to their own detachments to retrieve their revolvers and other equipment and this resulted in a delay in their arriving at Main Street. There also was some delay once the officers arrived at Main Street in assigning them to duties. During this time, about 75 additional R.C.M.P. officers and an additional 70 Vancouver Police Officers reported for duty. Each arriving R.C.M.P. member was teamed with a Vancouver Police Department officer, normally in a Vancouver Police Department car. As these reinforcements were deployed and tear gas masks and riot equipment were distributed, areas of the downtown core were brought under control. From midnight until 1:00, reports came in to the Communications Centre that various intersections were under control and were being held by police. Calls for assistance were slowing. The Vancouver Crowd Control Unit operated in the area of Granville Street from Robson to Nelson, dispersing groups of youths and generally breaking up concentrations of rock throwers. By midnight, this area was under police control. The unit stayed at Robson and Granville for about an hour and then returned to the Robson Media Centre. From 1:00 a.m. on, there were reports of sporadic mischief, but no large crowds. Robson Street was reopened at 1:46 a.m. The R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop returned to the West End Community Centre at 2:00 a.m. 30

E. THE AFTERMATH

By the end of the evening, approximately 500 police officers had been involved; some of these had been on duty since 7:00 a.m. on the 14th but had not been able to go home at the end of their shifts. The majority had been on duty since 6:00 p.m. and had not had a break until 2:00 or 3:00 a.m. Fifty-two ambulance attendants, an unknown number of firefighters and others on duty experienced one of the most exhausting evenings of their careers. Some of these workers experienced the unpleasant effects of tear gas exposure, and some received minor injuries from attacks by the crowd.

St Paul's hospital treated approximately 90 people in a two or three hour period, most for relatively minor injuries including lacerations, sprains, abrasions and fractures. The man who fell

30 After a break of slightly more than one hour break, this troop was dispatched to the airport to assist with crowd control there.
from the guide wires and the man who was hit in the head with the plastic baton from the Arwen 37 were the only serious injuries known at that time. [An additional 100 people (approximately) arrived at the hospital suffering the effects of tear gas or pepper spray.] The Fire Department reports that on the night of the riot there were approximately 130 incidents requiring their assistance. There were eight structure fires (three of them major), three car fires, five rubbish/dumpster fires and more than 50 emergency medical calls. City Hall Engineering Department boarded up 41 businesses as a direct result of the looting and smashing of windows. Early in the morning, the City of Vancouver Engineering Department flushed the streets clean of tear gas residue, litter and broken glass. As people came to the downtown core for work the next morning, glazier trucks were parked in front of the many damaged buildings. Eaton's store, for example, reported 80 windows broken.

The following day, things returned to normal downtown. Debriefings began. Many Vancouver police officers reported being overwhelmed by shows of public support such as flowers, candies and cards arriving at the front desk from members of the public. Media reports dealt with the actions of police, the actions of the crowd or the contention by many people downtown that evening that "there was no escape route" from the tear gas. Several newscasts commented the morning after that they did not think the police overreacted because of the hostility of the crowd downtown that evening; others questioned the use of the Arwen 37.

Police began two simultaneous and independent processes. The first was to analyze their planning for and response to the riot. The second was to ensure that as many people as possible who had committed criminal acts that evening were charged with them. Both these processes were still ongoing at the time this report was being written. The City of Vancouver announced that it would be examining the wider question of whether the riot might have been prevented. Attorney General Colin Gabelmann announced that he would be asking the B.C. Police Commission to inquire into the circumstances of the riot. Our report now turns to a discussion of various issues raised by the above sequence of events.

---

31 This man was held in hospital overnight and released the next day.
PART THREE

COULD THE RIOT HAVE BEEN PREVENTED?
PART THREE: COULD THE RIOT HAVE BEEN PREVENTED?

"Violence after sporting events is not unknown in our society and it occurs with alarming frequency in other countries such as Great Britain and some South American countries. There have been studies on this type of violence and there is now abundant literature on the subject. Violence following sporting events resists explanation because of the irrational element which, in defiance of all reasonable expectations, transforms an occasion for celebration into a pretext for destruction.

"...we believe it is important to show that there is collective responsibility for these events. Montrealers would be deluding themselves were they to place the full blame for the events on organized gangs, on kids, on members of a minority, on weak police response, or on any other narrow factor, for the responsibility must be assumed by the community as a whole if we really want to avoid any repetition of these events...."32

The above quote was taken from the report of an inquiry undertaken into disturbances in Montreal after that city's hockey team won the Stanley Cup, almost exactly one year prior to the disturbance in Vancouver. We endorse the sentiment echoed in the above portion and we devote this part of our report to exploring it further.

No one would argue that the best way to deal with a riot is to prevent it. We would not be so presumptuous as to state that the riot in Vancouver could have been prevented; the crowd was volatile at the outset and there was, by almost all accounts, a negative energy to it that was not there the previous Saturday. There was some intelligence suggesting that the evening would be used by troublemakers to create mayhem. The crowd was made up of young people, and there was no focus or direction to the gathering. These factors, combined with the consumption of alcohol and the hype and adrenalin of the hockey series, made for a situation that, with hindsight, appears to have been a riot waiting to happen. It is clear now though, also with hindsight, that there were a number of contributing factors to the riot and perhaps some things could have been done differently.

Our discussion in this part of the report considers whether the riot might have been prevented. The report first deals with planning and crowd control, then with the role of liquor in the disturbances, and finally with the role of the media. While the discussion in this part includes comments on the police role in relation to those issues, it does not include a discussion of police response. That is left to the fourth part of the report.

A. PLANNING AND CROWD CONTROL

How can you prepare for a riot?33

1. Police Planning

The Vancouver Police Department Regulations and Procedures Manual sets out the policy for planning the management and control of crowds in section 138(1). The policy is specifically directed at major demonstrations, but is stated to be "generally applicable in most situations involving the control of crowds." This policy guided the department's planning for June 14th, as it had guided the department's planning for many other major events, such as the Benson and Hedge's Fireworks Competition, Sea Festival and visits to the city by dignitaries.

Planning for June 14th started prior to the commencement of the Stanley Cup finals. On June 1st, 1994, the Vancouver Canucks organization called a planning meeting, to prepare for a civic reception. The meeting included the Vancouver Police Department, City of Vancouver management and engineering officials and Canucks' representatives. Although the main subject was an event following the finals to honour the Vancouver Canucks, discussion did ensue regarding possible crowd control problems during the finals.

Game six of the finals was held in Vancouver on Saturday, June 11th and extensive police planning, in coordination with other agencies, preceded that game in anticipation of possible problems. As events turned out, while large numbers of people did assemble in downtown Vancouver, major problems did not arise and crowd control units were not deployed.

Prior to June 14th, the Vancouver Police Department finalized a comprehensive operational plan for policing the city after the game. It is clear from the written plan that police anticipated large crowds in the downtown core, primarily along Robson Street. The plan clearly recognizes the potential for civil disorder:

"The history behind sports riots guides these operational plans. In most cases it is likely that a strong show of force and intolerance to criminal acts will prevent much larger scale disruptions or even riots.

"It is essential that any criminal acts receive a quick police response and that action is taken to arrest anyone observed causing damage to property or acts of assault. History has shown that the lack of action by the police can agitate a crowd as much as an over reaction."

33 From a letter addressed to the Police Commission from a 26 year-old Richmond resident.
The plan detailed command positions and responsibilities, stationing and responsibilities of all squads, including the Crowd Control Unit, traffic squads, bicycle squads, reserves, media relations and specialty squads. It called for the City of Vancouver Engineering Department to have a two person crew on duty with 250 sheets of plywood to board up windows either as a preventative measure or in case of breakage. It also set out telephone numbers to call for engineering; the engineering contact was to be in the Operations Room.

The plan called for three police officers to work as identification personnel, two on video cameras and one on still camera. Having identification officers on hand is seen as an important factor in counteracting anonymity in a crowd, and thus minimizing illegal behaviour.\(^{35}\)

As part of its preparations, a decision was taken by the Chief Constable of the Vancouver Police Department on June 13th to request the stand-by assistance of the R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop. This was done in accordance with a standing protocol arrangement between the Vancouver Police Department and the R.C.M.P.

The R.C.M.P. agreed to the request and developed its own plans for movement and stand-by and, if called upon, for operations. Its main role was to be as relief for the Vancouver Crowd Control Unit. The R.C.M.P. was part of, and was given a copy of, the Vancouver Police Department operational plan for the evening.

Police did not isolate their planning and preparations within the police community. They involved other bodies in their preparations. Examples of aspects of their planning that involved others in a productive way are as follows:

The Vancouver Police Department asked the Liquor Distribution Branch to close its three stores in the downtown core area early in anticipation of problems the previous Saturday. This request was also made and complied with in preparation for Tuesday evening.

Through a B.C. fax system "Crime Alert," the department faxed a notice to all the downtown business organizations on the system advising them to prepare for possible problems following the Tuesday night game. This included advice to remove from the outside of premises any easily moveable items, to darken the store, to secure waste containers in place, and so forth.

\(^{34}\) Vancouver Police Department, Stanley Cup Playoffs 1994, Final Game, Tuesday 94/06/04, Operational Plan.

The department made requests to Canada Post to remove mail boxes from the core downtown area.

The police asked the City of Vancouver Engineering Department to clean up construction sites and vacant lots.

We have reviewed the Vancouver Police Department policy on Planning for Crowd Control, contained in section 138 of its Policy and Procedures Manual. Generally, the policy is clear and comprehensive and the plan is well detailed. In our opinion, the manner in which the police and other agencies worked together in planning for the evening of the 14th was invaluable.

In hindsight, we note that the plan seemed to be deficient in two respects. First, while it assigned extra personnel, there is no indication of the rationale for how the number of personnel was arrived at. The inquiry into the disturbances that occurred in Montreal following the Stanley Cup victory there in 1993 emphasized the need for police departments to determine the number of officers that should be on duty based on an estimate of the expected crowd. After the Vancouver Police Department completes its review of police actions on the night in question, it will have a clearer idea about how to determine staffing requirements, and we suggest the department incorporate a thoughtful assessment of resource requirements into its planning process. We also note that crowd control literature suggests that police are better served by overestimating the number of officers they will require, rather than underestimating. Cost implications make this a difficult decision, but the department should be encouraged by its budget managers to err on the side of prevention.

Second, in our opinion, insufficient consideration was given to potential traffic problems. Although decisions were made regarding which streets would be closed and the directions in which traffic would be re-routed, the department did not deploy sufficient traffic officers to control the traffic on Georgia Street that resulted from the closures.
2. Planning by Other Agencies and Crowd Control in General

Other agencies in the City were also involved in their own planning for the evening of June 14th. The Vancouver Fire Department added additional personnel for June 14th and also alerted fire departments of neighbouring jurisdictions of the possibility that it might require assistance.

The Fire Department had participated in planning for potential problems following the Saturday, June 11th game and, as a result, added its own computer terminal to the Vancouver Police Department operations room so that the Fire Department would have direct access to its computer-assisted dispatch system.

The provincial ambulance service (Emergency Health Services) was involved in the discussions and briefings in preparation for June 14th. It developed its own plans for handling potential problems and, in particular, put in a separate communications system to deal specifically with calls from the downtown core area. Further, it was agreed that the ambulance service would provide four ambulance attendants on bicycles to work with the Vancouver Police Department bicycle unit during the evening of June 14th.

B.C. Transit, including the bus service, SeaBus and SkyTrain, made its preparations. Additional shuttle buses were provided for, as were extra supervisors and staff. In addition, SkyTrain put on the maximum number of trains as of the early afternoon.

Upon the request of the Vancouver Police Department, the Vancouver City Engineering Department undertook a variety of initiatives in preparation for June 14th. It had a crew ready with 250 sheets of plywood should they be required. It caused the removal, from the downtown core, of city waste and garbage containers, as well as certain bus shelters, and asked newspaper vendors to remove the newspaper sales boxes. The owners of a construction site at the corner of Robson and Thurlow were asked to remove an overhead sidewalk covering and to reinforce the remaining upright plywood wall. The owners complied, and also hauled away some loose debris from the site, hired security guards for the evening and installed floodlights for extra security.

During the planning process, no contact was made with officials of the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch, which regulates all the licensed drinking establishments in the area, as well as all the wine and beer stores. While interrupting private businesses may not have been appropriate, we believe that a program, conducted through the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch, to
monitor sales of liquor and possible abuses of licensing provisions (and to perhaps require early
closing of wine and beer stores) should have been considered.

While the above agencies and organizations were involved in their own planning, they were also
working in a coordinated fashion with other agencies, and it is a credit to all those involved that
they were able to put forth a concerted and comprehensive plan for the 14th. Because the
coordination of the plans and operations of the various agencies involved was an important
feature of the planning process, a command operations room was established at the Vancouver
Police Department Headquarters. This room was first used prior to the Saturday, June 11th
game, to manage anticipated crowd control problems on that date.

The room provided a coordinated Command Centre for the police, fire, Emergency Health
Services, B.C. Transit, city engineering, and R.C.M.P. representatives. The operations room was
also used on the weekend and on the Monday for planning sessions involving the agencies. It was
put into formal operation on the Tuesday at 5:00 p.m. with all those agencies represented. In
addition, representatives were also in attendance from the Provincial Emergency Program and the
Vancouver City Emergency Operations Centre. These two bodies were not directly involved in
preparation for the June 14th event, but had an overall city emergency and disaster planning role.

A number of the representatives present in the Command Centre stated afterwards that the room
was too small for the number of people involved. It was crowded and noisy and there was no
space to set up a map on which information could be displayed to follow the flow of activity. At
the same time, there was a feeling that communication and cooperation among the agencies was
very good. This was attributed, in part, to a joint disaster exercise in May of this year called
Canatex 2, which simulated a mock 8.5 richter earthquake disaster in the Vancouver area. Most
of the same agencies had been involved in that exercise.

While communications planning was the responsibility of the various agencies concerned, the
existence of the operations room provided the opportunity for coordination of the various
communication systems. Communication proved to be a major problem, as is discussed in the
section on police response.

Several comments we received from members of the public dealt with the absence in Vancouver
of a "proper place to celebrate" and the perception that this was at the root of the problems
experienced on the 14th. The sentiment was expressed that the gathering of a large crowd in the
downtown core, with glass store fronts and no open areas, is something our city should not encourage.

"In effect, the city just invited the riot because it provided no alternative to people other than to congregate aimlessly on Robson Street and because it then failed to adequately control the crowd which inevitably gathered." (Vancouver resident)

"For any large crowd event in the city involving the young, the potentially angry, make sure it occurs in a large open space away from stores and businesses that might be harmed." (Vancouver resident)

"In regards to your Stanley Cup investigation, there is the question of ‘why it happened.’ The reason is that there is no right place to celebrate in our city. That’s our trouble now to celebrate such events. People need a large area." (Vancouver resident)

The crowd had a tendency to congregate on Robson Street because it is normally a lively street. Crowds were further encouraged to go there by media coverage of the previous Saturday and on the day of the riot and by the traffic closure on Robson Street. Once the crowd arrived at Robson Street there was nothing for them to do but “hang out” and wait for something to happen.

We do not have enough information to know if the City has a location that would be more suitable or if the issue has been considered by City Planners. Furthermore, we have neither the information nor the expertise to make a recommendation on this issue, but we raise it as a concern. If, for example, the Canucks reach the final of the Stanley Cup playoffs next year and the final game is played at the new stadium currently under construction, where should the crowds be directed or encouraged to go after the game?

We do note that the Report of the Special Inquiry Into the Disturbances Following the Montreal Canadiens’ Stanley Cup Victory suggested that Montreal prohibit big television screen showings of such games in the downtown area. In this regard, we note that the largest such showing, and the one that seems to have generated the greatest number of problems, was at the P.N.E. grounds, some 15 or 20 minutes from downtown. In our opinion, there must be stricter controls over the consumption of alcohol at such events, an issue which is dealt with in the next section.

It is clear to us that crowd control and management cannot be left solely to police and we were pleased to learn about the extensive involvement of other agencies in planning for the 14th. Preparations for the night in question focussed on a cooperative approach among all the agencies.
involved. Is it possible to go one step further and get the public involved in preventing such occurrences?

The Commission that examined the disturbances in Montreal after the Stanley Cup victory there in 1993 recognized the difficulty faced by police when the public relies solely on them to prevent gatherings from erupting into a riot:

"Even if the police use a differentiated approach and strive for balance in their actions, there remains a risk that zero tolerance of group violence will lead to a militarization of the police which would be difficult to reconcile with the exercise of rights and freedoms; this risk will be all the greater if we rely solely on the police to ensure orderly crowd conduct. Insofar as the demand that a repetition of disorders such as the ones of June 9-10, 1993 be avoided is conceived exclusively in policing terms, the police will be forced to adopt ever more repressive methods...."

That Commission felt that, because of this, the public must take responsibility for crowd management, but it was not specific about how this might be done. One idea, brought forward by a senior police officer with crowd management experience, is to have a trained core of young people who could act as "civilian crowd managers": a link between the crowd and the police. These people would not be dressed as police officers, nor would they be police officers. They would be dressed to stand out--orange t-shirts, perhaps, for example. These monitors would be trained in crowd psychology and crowd management. They could be used to simply walk through the crowd in formation telling them that it was "time to go home" and showing them the best way to do this. They might ask people to dispose of their liquor before the police did it for them. They could also notify police if they spotted signs of trouble. We suggest young people in this role because crowds that causes trouble are usually young. We note that many in the crowd on the night in question appeared to take on the role of "monitor" in a volunteer capacity, stopping fights and keeping the crowd back from police when they were trying to help. In our opinion, peer crowd managers, if properly trained, might be effective in detecting or avoiding the escalation of a situation to the point that it went on June 14.

Obviously, civilian monitors can only be used when the crowd needs "managing" as opposed to "control." If and when things digress to the point when police intervention is needed, the civilian monitors must be removed from the scene for their own safety.

We note that South Africa, a country with a history of election violence, has experimented with a form of civilian monitors in attempts to prevent violence from erupting in the crowds during
elections and we think there may be examples of its use in other jurisdictions as well. We raise the issue as one for consideration but make no recommendation about it.

In concluding our remarks on planning, The Commission finds that the officials from the various agencies concerned properly and responsibly anticipated that problems could follow the seventh game of the Stanley Cup on June 14th. They made appropriate and effective plans in a timely manner. The professionalism and cooperation which characterised this planning process is to be commended.

Alcohol played a part in this riot. Anticipation of this should have been given a higher profile in the planning process. To this end, representatives of the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch and the City Bylaw Enforcement Arm should have been involved, as appropriate, in the planning process. The next part of this report deals with the specifics of how the involvement of those agencies may have assisted the situation.

3. Recommendations Relating to Planning

R.1 That the Vancouver Police Department incorporate into its planning process a method by which to calculate the number of officers that should be deployed for crowd control. Included in the method should be such factors as anticipated size and makeup of crowd.

R.2 That the Vancouver Police Department incorporate into its planning process a traffic management plan that anticipates traffic problems when a major street is closed for a special event.

R.3 That the City of Vancouver, in cooperation with other city, municipal and provincial agencies, establish an appropriate emergency operations centre in the downtown core which will properly accommodate all necessary user groups and which would include appropriate technology and communications equipment sufficient to properly manage emergency situations in the lower mainland area.

R.4 That when planning for anticipated crowd control problems, such as occurred on June 14th, attention be paid to possible liquor abuse situations and that
representatives of the Liquor Distribution Branch and the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch be involved as appropriate.36

B. ROLE OF ALCOHOL

"Americans relentlessly insist on immersing sport—our most wholesome, most admired, even (sometimes) most heroic institution—in a sea of intoxicating drink.

"Once you’re into the demographics of sports, you are also into the total demographics of beer drinking. You get them all, from the couch-potato spectator to the high-action, participating jocks—joggers, softball players, bowlers. Even at a very high price, it is an extremely cost-efficient buy. TV sports and beer commercials are a perfect marriage."37

The above writer, in discussing the inseparability of beer and sport, explores the problems that result from the marketing of beer through advertising at sporting events and endorsements by sports “heroes.” It is a complex and universal problem throughout the world. The combination of excessive alcohol consumption and the adrenalin surrounding sporting events has often contributed to civil disorder in this country. In other countries, it has had disastrous consequences. In many ways, the problem is so universal and complex as to be beyond the capability of any local authority to tackle, but experiences in other jurisdictions show that improvements can be made.

The events of the evening of June 14th were fueled by alcohol. There is evidence of overconsumption at the wide screen showing of the game at the P.N.E. and at the bars and restaurants along Robson Street. There is evidence of open drinking both on SkyTrain and on the streets that evening. Curtailing this consumption was not the primary responsibility of the police. Indeed, they could not have expected to deal with any of it that evening because their energies were overextended simply trying to keep public order.

1. Consumption of Alcohol at the P.N.E.

There is ample evidence of overconsumption of alcohol at the P.N.E. (Pacific National Exhibition). Security guards had to evict 40 people from the Coliseum as the game progressed. We were told some “family” attendees left the game because of the deteriorating atmosphere.

36 Specific aspects of this recommendation are set out in the next section.
The disturbances close to the P.N.E. after the game can be attributed in large measure to a combination of frustration, youth and alcohol.

Attendees were not searched for alcohol and drugs upon entering the Coliseum. This meant that many people brought in their own alcohol. A Vancouver woman writes:

“When my two children (ages 10 and 13) and I arrived at the Coliseum, we found the vast majority of those in attendance were teenagers, perhaps 16 to 17 years old. What surprised us was the open drinking of alcohol and the heavy smoking. These kids were waving their pint bottles of liquor and were lighting up tobacco and pot openly, yet none of the security personnel at the Coliseum cared. And in addition, many people sat on the stairs between rows of seats drinking and smoking; several times Coliseum staff picked their way through these people without saying a word.”

Legal beer sales at the event were also a problem. P.N.E. officials said that drinking is allowed only in the bar area and that patrons are allowed two beer at any one time. This policy had the effect, for some, of encouraging them to engage in “power drinking”: purchasing two drinks and then returning to the end of the beverage lineup to drink those two while waiting to purchase more.

The Vancouver Police Department advised the Commission that no officers were deployed to the P.N.E. at the outset of the game because, although the P.N.E. had requested four officers, the department determined 11 officers were necessary to provide adequate policing and the P.N.E. was not prepared to pay the amount that that level of policing would cost. The chief of P.N.E. security expected a similar make up to the crowd of June 9th, the date of the 5th game of the finals. This had also been played in New York and televised at the Coliseum, but there had been few problems. Consequently, there were no police on site. It was reported that fights, open drinking of alcohol and break dancing occurred in the Coliseum and were handled by P.N.E. security staff. The study team determined the police costs would have been about $800 an hour or $2,400 for the minimum three hour call-out. It must be remembered that this was a charity event, not a profit one, and paying policing costs would have generated less income for the charity. Altruistic as those reasons may be, we believe that they do not provide a sufficient justification for not hiring sufficient police to prevent problems from occurring. In our opinion, the event should have had a police presence and security personnel should have searched

38 The day after the event, the chief of security for the Coliseum stated that "It was very obvious that the majority of people showed up to “party,” not to take part in a Stanley Cup game."
attendees for alcohol. We also believe that security personnel should not have allowed the open consumption of alcohol in the stands. They may also have helped to discourage the “power drinking” phenomenon described above, although we recognize that a person bent on overconsumption will manage to do so despite the vigilance of security personnel. A restaurant or bar owner’s liquor license is in jeopardy if intoxicated customers are served alcohol. The rules with respect to serving alcohol at sporting events should be the same and should be rigorously applied.

The Heysel Stadium tragedy on May 29, 1985 in Brussels, which resulted in the deaths of many people, prompted a European Convention for control of spectator violence and misbehaviour. This convention, drawn up and entered into force in record time, has formed the basis for legislative change and enforcement decisions in many European countries whose historical problems with violence and sporting events make ours pale in insignificance. Finding that alcohol consumption was a contributor to the Heysel tragedy, the parties to the Convention agreed to introduce appropriate legislation to, among other things, exclude people under the influence of alcohol or drugs from access to matches and “to prohibit the introduction of alcoholic drinks by spectators into stadia; to restrict, and preferably ban, the sale and any distribution of alcoholic drinks at stadia; and to ensure that all beverages available are in safe containers.” The history of violence and misbehaviour at, or associated with, sporting events in all countries has pointed out the need for restrictions on alcohol sales at those events, increased vigilance by security staff and an increased police presence. The riot of the 14th means that Vancouver can no longer ignore the trend happening in other parts of the world.

2. Overconsumption in the Bars and Restaurants Downtown

The media reports that depicted a “party atmosphere” in the bars and restaurants on Robson Street early in the afternoon are, by all accounts, accurate. Many bars were full by noon. After the game, these patrons spilled out onto Robson Street under the influence of alcohol. We suspect that some of these restaurants and bars were not particularly concerned about “over serving”: that is, allowing already intoxicated patrons to purchase more alcohol.

An explanation of the regulatory responsibilities relating to liquor is in order here. The *Liquor Distribution Act*\(^\text{40}\) governs the operation of government liquor stores. The *Liquor Control and Licensing Act*\(^\text{41}\) governs licensed premises and privately owned beer and wine stores. General managers are appointed under both acts to carry out the functions of the respective legislation. To our knowledge, the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch had no license inspectors on duty that evening and we believe they should have had a strong presence. We note that in Penticton, in response to problems which developed over the long August weekends in the '80s, the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch brings in additional inspectors to take over “walk throughs” of licensed establishments, leaving the police to concentrate on activity in the streets and to deal with complaints. Licensed establishments would be unlikely to risk their liquor licenses if they knew there was a likelihood of being inspected on such evenings. We also believe that when violations of the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act* occur, convictions should be pursued with diligence and strong penalties should be sought.

The objection might conceivably surface that there are an insufficient number of inspectors to monitor these premises on such evenings. If this is the case, we believe that more should be hired, even if just for special events. Taxes on the sales of liquor are a major source of revenue for the government and if abuse of liquor is a problem, some of those revenues should be applied towards dealing with it.

Recent amendments were made to the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act* as a result of recommendations of the Task Force on Public Order (Snowdon Report).\(^\text{42}\) These amendments give power to the general manager of the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch to immediately suspend the license of a licensee and to close the establishment without a hearing for a period of 24 hours where the conduct of a licensee's patrons is “of a riotous, violent, drunken or disorderly nature.”

The general manager is also given the authority to “suspend, or impose conditions on a licence for a period not exceeding 24 hours if, in the general manager's opinion, it is in the public interest to do so.”\(^\text{43}\) The use of this section would have allowed special conditions to be placed on licensed establishments for the evening of June 14th.

\(^{40}\) R.S.B.C. 1979, c. 238.
\(^{41}\) R.S.B.C. 1979, c. 237.
\(^{42}\) This Task Force was established to explore the causes of the disturbances in Penticton over the long August weekend in 1990.
\(^{43}\) Liquor Control and Licensing Act, s. 24.1(1).
3. Consumption and Transportation on SkyTrain

People brought liquor into the downtown area on public transportation facilities such as SkyTrain, SeaBus and B.C. Transit buses. There were two security employees assigned to the Surrey platforms and two more were situated at the 29th Avenue Station. Four were assigned to handle the downtown Vancouver stations.

Because of uncontrolled access to the SkyTrain, some passengers boarded in an intoxicated state and some drank openly while on board. There were insufficient numbers of SkyTrain security staff to monitor the situation. A Vancouver man writes that he watched the game in Burnaby and boarded the SkyTrain at the Edmonds Station for a ride to Vancouver:

"I chose to get off the SkyTrain at Joyce Station and did so feeling the potential for trouble was very real. I was also struck, however by the lack of SkyTrain police and other officials. It seemed to me that their presence was not only advisable, but necessary on this occasion."

SkyTrain officials told the Commission that they do not have the resources to check for non-compliance with liquor laws. This contrasts with the Edmonton Light Rail Transit (ELT) which seems to have the resources to enforce a “zero tolerance” policy for violation of liquor laws. Officials with the ELT system reported that those who are found drinking on the system have their liquor removed, are issued a bylaw infraction ticket, and are requested to leave and not return for the evening. Those who are intoxicated and causing a safety concern for others are arrested for being drunk in a public place and are turned over to the Edmonton City Police. Those who continue to cause a problem on the system are banned from Edmonton Transit for a period of three to six months.

The ELT security risk management administrator noted that the transit system operates with the honour fare access to trains also, but that operators are on board. For major sporting events, ticket agents, backed by inspectors, are brought in to the stations to collect cash fares and tickets and to control liquor entry at the open station points.

In our opinion, SkyTrain should endeavour to emulate the manner in which ELT approaches the enforcement of provincial liquor laws.
4. **Consumption on the Streets**

On Monday, June 13th police asked the Liquor Distribution Branch to close the retail outlets on Davie Street, Thurlow Street and Robson Street at 7:00 pm on Tuesday, June 14th. This was done. The fact that it was reflects positively on both the police, who initiated the request, and the Liquor Distribution Branch, which complied with it.

However, liquor was still available for purchase in the area. No approaches were made to the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch seeking early closure of privately owned beer and wine stores or the restriction of off-sales in licensed establishments in the area. Obviously, it is far easier for the government to close its outlets than it is to require a private business to forego income, but the request was not even put forward to the Branch to consider.

The consumption of liquor in a public place is contrary to the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, section 42(1). The Snowdon Report found that although open consumption was contrary to the law, the provisions of that act were difficult to enforce. Consequently, amendments were made to the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act* to enhance enforcement of the Act. The enforcement of provisions against possession of alcohol was, of course, the responsibility of police. Police response in relation to this issue is dealt with in the next section.

5. **Recommendations Relating to Alcohol Consumption**

**R.5** That at all major spectator sporting events, including those viewed on a wide-screen television, security personnel be required to check patrons for possession of alcohol when entering the stadium or viewing theatre.

**R.6** That at all major spectator sporting events, including those viewed on a wide-screen television, the sponsor be required to provide an adequate police presence at its expense.

**R.7** That at all major spectator sporting events, including those viewed on a wide-screen television, security guards and police remove alcohol from those people who are openly drinking in the stands.
R.8 That appropriate measures be taken by police and security personnel on duty, as well as representatives from the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch, to ensure that Section 45 of the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act* (not permitting a person to become intoxicated) is enforced at major spectator sporting events where alcohol is available for purchase.

R.9 That consideration be given by the police departments of the municipalities surrounding Vancouver to undertaking spot checks of vehicles coming into Vancouver during major special events and celebrations in the City of Vancouver.

R.10 That when government liquor outlets are asked to close early, consideration be given by the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch to making similar arrangements for beer and wine stores and off-premises sales in licensed establishments.

R.11 That on evenings of major sporting events in the areas where overconsumption in licensed premises can be anticipated, the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch should ensure strict monitoring by representatives of the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch of licensed premises. When violations are discovered, the Branch should penalize violators to the full extent of the law.

R.12 That on evenings of major sporting events in the areas where overconsumption in licensed premises can be anticipated, the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch should consider the use of Section 24(1) of the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act* to attach special conditions to the liquor licenses of drinking establishments in the areas.

R.13 That B.C. Transit ensure it has sufficient security staff, including Special Provincial Constables, on duty on evenings of major spectator sporting events to adequately enforce provincial legislation and SkyTrain policies related to the use of alcohol on the system.

R.14 That consideration be given by municipal police in the jurisdiction of major SkyTrain stations to have a visible presence on evenings of major spectator sporting events where the abuse of alcohol is anticipated.
C. ROLE OF THE MEDIA

The role of the media in relation to riots can be an esoteric and complex issue. This report is not the place to discuss that role in broad philosophical terms, but we would be remiss if we did not discuss the specific roles the media played prior to, during and after the disturbances of June 14th. As we see it, the media's role in relation to this riot warrants discussion from three perspectives: first, as a contributor to the excitement that increased throughout the series and contributed to the eruption on June 14th; second, in its coverage of the events of the 14th; and third, in the aftermath of the riot. These are all linked, in a way, but separating them facilitates our discussion.

1. Role of the Media in Enhancing the Excitement

"For weeks media outlets, print and electronic, whipped a community into a frenzy over a series of hockey games. Today it expresses dismay and surprise that the hysteria fanned spilled into a full-fledged riot.... all three media outlets took part in the hype with appeals to the lowest common denominator in their readers, viewers or listeners. Starting with the childish 'tell us why you hate Toronto' series, through the constant belligerence of a former hockey coach now TV commentator, the hype escalated without a thought to the goon element of society, an element incapable of differentiating between good fun and throwing bottles at policemen."45

The Vancouver Canucks had a good season prior to the Stanley Cup. When the team reached the playoffs, media and public interest increased. As the playoffs continued, particularly as many games and series were closely matched, viewer and media interest increased. When the Canucks made it to the final round, even non-hockey fans were beginning to take notice. Not content to simply cover the games as they were played, the media tended to play up the rivalry between the two teams. We think this may have contributed to a heightening of the tension that exploded on June 14th.

The media paid particular attention to the celebrations following the sixth game victory on Saturday, June 11, especially along Robson Street. Although the Saturday evening crowd was happy and family oriented, some media outlets gave the impression that the orderliness of the crowd was somewhat unusual. One member of the public who felt the tone of this coverage was contributory to the events of the 14th wrote:

"After Game 6 the crowd gathered in Robson Street with the camera ready and waiting. The tone of the newscasts said, 'Look at these people! They're not rioting!' In the next 48 hours much of the media hype centred on Robson Street and what would happen there. The message to the viewers was 'tune in and we'll see if they riot this time!'"

In our opinion, if indeed there was such a tone to these broadcasts, its contributory effect to the events of the 14th was slight.

One newspaper was particularly irresponsible. The May 25th printing of an alternate press newspaper called *Terminal City* had a cover page entitled “Hockey Night in Vancouver” with a drawing of blackened, burning shops on Robson Street. A column inside the issue urged readers to “Booze Up and Riot” and to “Loot, Loot, Loot” on the night “the Canucks win.” *Terminal City* does not have a large circulation but it is a free newspaper that targets a young population. It is hard to determine what, if any effect, the issue had.

We think the media must share some responsibility for the type of broadcasting that heightens the rivalry and aggressiveness of a sporting event. The difficulty here, of course, is in seeking the media's cooperation in balancing their independent coverage of such events with the recognition that such coverage may have unintended results.

Riots after sporting events used to be fairly rare in Canada. They are no longer. The media must be made to recognize that they act irresponsibly if they contributes to the problem and then sit back, leaving it up to police to deal with the results.

"...when situations fraught with danger arise, media should always ask: Are we covering this story—or creating it? An honest answer can save a lot of anguish."

2. Role of the Media on the 14th

On the 14th, the media could be criticised from two perspectives: first, in its coverage of the "party atmosphere" on Robson Street prior to the game and second, in locating its cameras in a fixed location.

On Tuesday afternoon, media outlets were broadcasting video footage of people in bars and restaurants before the game who had been there for hours, getting “primed” for the game. Some tables had reportedly been occupied all afternoon. That many of these patrons were intoxicated after the game would not have come as a surprise to anyone watching the television reports.

---

46 Hume, op. cit.
showing the “buildup” to the game. These reports linked heavy drinking and “celebration” of the game and encouraged people to come to Robson Street after the game.

Someone else wrote to criticize media advertising of police precautions:

“We believe the media has its place in reporting the news but their discretion is sometimes sadly lacking. It seems to us that they are partly responsible for the riot in Vancouver. We watched BCTV at 5:00 p.m. and again at 6:00 p.m. on the night of the riot and were shocked that the reporters seemed to be ‘advertising’ the precautions that the police were taking in the event of there being a problem downtown. (We presume other stations were doing the same thing.) We believe that if the matter had been left to the police and the media had not been involved, the riot would possibly never have occurred. Most of the hoodlums would not have heard of the police precautions and would not have been offered the opportunity to concentrate and misbehave in the downtown area.”

There is a difference between “advertising police precautions” and securing the cooperation of the public and informing the public of the “game rules” for the evening. Examples of the latter might be telling the public that certain streets will be closed; that pub owners have been asked to be particularly vigilant with over serving; that liquor inspectors will be increased to ensure that they are vigilant; and that police want to ensure that the party is fun for all and thus will be vigilant about the consumption of alcohol. This type of media coverage would likely have had a different effect than coverage showing the overconsumption of alcohol and the efforts of police to deal with “trouble.”

We have been told that a police spokesperson came on television in the early evening and invited the public to join the party on Robson Street after the game. It is particularly surprising to us that this happened, in view of police intelligence gathered prior to the 14th suggesting that there might be trouble. We suggest that in future, the media relations person portray the event as a peaceful and quiet “family” event and downplay any “party” atmosphere.47

3. **Location of Cameras**

Studies of other disturbances have noted the ability of media cameras and floodlights to agitate a crowd, and we think they were a contributory factor in this riot as well.48 The fact that the Saturday night celebration crowd congregated at Robson and Thurlow meant that media

---

47 This approach has been found to be successful. See Veno, Arthur and Elizabeth Veno, “Managing Public Order at the Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix,” American Journal of Community Psychology, Vol 20, No. 3 (1992), p. 297 - 308, at 300.

48 See, for example, Malouf, Albert, Report of the Special Inquiry Into the Disturbances Following the Montreal Canadiens Stanley Cup Victory. September 1993.
concentrated their broadcast and viewing points near that intersection for the Tuesday game. This location was advantageous in allowing them to capture the crowd and transmit to their microwave units. We are of the opinion that the location of the cameras at that point, however (especially since many of them were fixed and not roving) may have exacerbated the situation by keeping the crowd in that intersection.

Several members of the public shared our concern:

"When the end of Game 7 neared, the cameras had been in position and rolling for several hours. It was an irresistible invitation for those who are so inclined to perform in front of a large and hungry audience. The fact that the cameras had been set up hours beforehand in selected vantage points such as rooftops was a premeditated and irresponsible provocation on the part of the news organizations. For this they must be accountable to the people of Vancouver and the victims."

"...the cameras were all too visible on the rooftops on the south-east corner of the intersection. This was in marked contrast to the previous Saturday, when the cameras were moving about and those performing had to follow suit...."

The location of the cameras dictated, to a certain extent, the location of the largest group of people. Police could not have easily dispersed the crowd throughout the downtown area because the cameras gave the message that "this was the site of the party." Police may have had an easier time in dispersing the crowd if the fixed cameras and lights at that intersection had not been so noticeable.

We must be careful that we do not create additional problems by not allowing fixed camera locations, however. Police in Montreal state that, during the disturbances there in 1993, they were hampered in their work by media vehicles and equipment. If fixed media locations are discouraged, thought must be given to whether the consequent media vehicles might pose as great a problem.

We should note that the visibility of the police cameras, as opposed to media cameras, may work as a deterrent, and we do not therefore make any recommendation about keeping police cameras out of sight, if it is obvious they are police cameras. Some studies suggest that obvious police video surveillance may work to counteract anonymity, which is one of the factors that precipitates misbehaviour in a crowd.
Although we have no evidence that such occurred in this instance, we are also concerned that media coverage of riots while they are in progress can have the effect of inciting others to join in the fracas. In that regard, we note that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation provides its journalists with guidelines on covering riots and civil disorders in its handbook entitled *Journalistic Standards and Practices*:

"In some cases of riots or civil disorder, it is clear that the presence of cameras and microphones has provoked violence. There is also evidence that in other situations the presence of the media has had a moderating effect on violent incidents."\(^{50}\)

CBC reporters are instructed to stop using cameras and microphones, and in some circumstances, to conceal equipment if they believe their presence may be a contributing factor to a potentially dangerous situation.

In our opinion, all media outlets should adopt a suitable code of conduct, if they do not already have one, particularly as far as the videotaping of large crowds is concerned.

**4. Role of the Media in the Aftermath**

We would like to express our appreciation for the cooperation of those media representatives that supplied uncut video tapes and other information for the purposes of our work. These tapes provided an important and useful information base. We commend the media for allowing the Commission access to their tapes in the public interest.

We should mention that there was considerable discussion and some litigation about whether media should provide their footage of the riot to the police to assist them in identifying those who participated in criminal acts on the night of the riot. The tapes were delivered to police, but we have been informed that appeals may be outstanding. Therefore, we will not comment further on the matter.


5. Recommendations Relating to the Media

R.15 That in the future when dealing with events where large crowds are anticipated, the Vancouver Police Department media liaison person be apprised by the Field Commander of potential problems anticipated during the evening so that an appropriate media approach may be developed; the media relations person should focus on downplaying any “party” atmosphere and portray the event as peaceful and quiet.

R.16 That consideration be given to seeking the cooperation of the media in not locating their cameras in a fixed position. If the cameras remain in a fixed position (for the safety of media personnel, for example) attempts should be made to make them as inconspicuous as possible.

R.17 That all local media outlets be asked to develop and adopt a code of conduct to govern their videotaping of large crowds.
PART FOUR

POLICE RESPONSE ON THE 14TH
PART FOUR: POLICE RESPONSE ON THE 14TH

There are several aspects to police response on the 14th that bear examination. It makes sense to begin with police deployment and examine the question of whether Vancouver had sufficient police on duty.

A. POLICE DEPLOYMENT

Vancouver Police Department officers were deployed for maximum visibility on Robson Street: one squad per block. This showed an awareness of the potential problems on Robson Street.

Literature and other studies of past riots emphasize the need for visibility of police rather than simply sheer numbers. In spite of the number of officers stationed along Robson Street--one squad per block--the police did not appear to be very visible on Robson Street, and this was perhaps simply because they blended into the large crowd.

"A more visible police presence right from the start would throw fear into the potential rioters before the start up, and send a message to those who would violate laws that they would be properly dealt with. Start right from the game. This would be useful for whatever events would fall into this category."

(Vancouver resident)

"My first response to the situation is that the police used the wrong strategy in staying out of the Robson and Thurlow core of the crowd. The only police that we saw were standing on Robson Street several blocks away near Eaton's. It would have been easier to have one or two police officers stationed at Robson and Thurlow with loud speakers to keep the crowd under control before it erupted. In other words, the police should have stopped people from swinging on the wires, tearing down boarding, at 8:30 rather than waiting until the situation was urgent and using tear gas after 10:00 pm."

One suggestion, brought forward from the Toronto study into disturbances in that city that occurred after the World Series in 1992 and 1993, was for police to have very visible fluorescent vests. We believe, after viewing the videos, that fluorescent vests would have given police a greater visibility.

As mentioned in the Planning Section, we do not know how the number of officers scheduled for duty was calculated. We also think that greater attention should have been given to traffic enforcement in the very early evening.
When the decision was made to call out extra personnel, several problems were experienced. First, some telephone lists were not up to date; second, R.C.M.P. officers were required to attend at their detachment to retrieve their weapons and this caused significant delay; third, once they arrived at 312 Main Street, many waited a long time to be deployed. As a result, by the time they got on the street, the crisis situation was majoritively over. These are internal police management problems that have been identified by the departments involved. We are confident they will be rectified by them and therefore make no recommendation in relation to these matters.

B. POLICE RESPONSE AND TACTICS

1. Discussion

Police enforced liquor laws earlier in the day and ordered people carrying alcoholic beverages to dump their drinks on the street. This procedure had been successful the previous Saturday but was met with hostility on Tuesday by 8:00 p.m. As the size of the crowd increased and its mood became more hostile, concern for the officers’ safety led to a decision by the Field Commander at approximately 8:00 p.m. that police would not enter the crowd to deal with liquor infractions or to remove agitators, for fear of provoking the crowd. One member of the public gives his assessment of the effect the early enforcement action had on the crowd:

"... I watched as flustered officers strode into the crowd, grabbed beer bottles or tins from people's hands and dumped them out on the ground... I'm not condoning illegal activities here but in dealing with a crowd this size this type of concentration on minutiae struck me as madness. All it did was help turn depressed drunks into angry drunks."

A spontaneous parade of vehicles on Georgia Street, with people sitting in dangerous positions on hoods or roofs, standing upright through sun roofs, leaning out windows, or sitting on the backs of open vans, was allowed to continue, even though traffic lights, stop signs and pedestrian crossings were largely ignored by drivers. Once the parade began, enforcement would have had the effect of curtailing the parade and could have provoked hostilities. In hindsight, it would have been preferable to stop the parade before it began. It appears that after the parade began, attempts to stop it were unsuccessful because of the great number of pedestrians and vehicles that simply ignored barricades, traffic signals and police directions.
After the evening of the 14th was over, police who had been on duty on both evenings, and media that had been in attendance on both evenings, reported that the composition of the crowd on the 11th and the composition of the crowd on the 14th were very different. The former crowd consisted of people from a wide age range, with many families present, while the latter was made up primarily of teenagers and young people. The atmosphere on the two nights was very different too: On Saturday, there was a harmonious atmosphere and on Tuesday there was a volatile and disruptive atmosphere to the crowd early in the evening. 51

Some of the public input we received and the media articles we reviewed voiced criticism of what was perceived as a too lax stance by police in the early evening:

"You asked for comments and recommendations. We feel the situation in the intersection should have been taken care of hours before the incident. How could anyone have been allowed to climb the traffic poles and awnings and been left alone? The police did come and get people down from Starbucks but left the crazy idiots on the wires."

We do not share that view. Seeking to avoid trouble by seeking to avoid confrontation is an accepted principle of crowd management when dealing with a volatile crowd, particularly where alcohol is involved.

"It is important generally—and particularly during periods of civil unrest—that officers exercise restraint when dealing with suspects and offenders in volatile neighbourhoods. Traffic stops and other enforcement actions should be conducted whenever possible where they will not attract attention and draw curiosity seekers or troublemakers. Officers should exercise particular caution when conducting enforcement actions around public gathering places such as parks or fast food restaurants and anywhere where drug use or alcohol is being consumed.

During initial contact with riotous crowds, responding officers should avoid taking enforcement actions; rather, they should make observations from a distance to determine the temperament of the crowd and the potential for violence." 52

We find that the approach of police in the early evening was in keeping with current research on crowd management which favours "low key police tactics, police nonintervention, and an

effective police-community liaison structure."  Recent Australian research confirms and extends earlier research suggesting:

"An authoritarian or heavy-handed paramilitary approach to policing public order seems to increase public hostility toward the police, whereas a non-authoritarian or collaborating approach creates a strong positive regard for the police."

Current literature emphasizes the importance of striking a balance "between tolerance and good humour and the need to act early in a deteriorating situation." Research on crowd behaviour also highlights the need to "know the crowd," to constantly monitor and evaluate the mood of a crowd.

"It is easy to over-react to non-threatening signs and almost as easy to allow real, belligerent behaviour to pass unnoticed. Crowds are like highly volatile substances; given the appropriate conditions, a violent chemical interaction will occur."

Our review of the evening suggests that police were correct in assessing the crowd as hostile to them as early as 8:00 p.m. and, if that assessment was correct, current literature suggests that non-enforcement of non-injurious conduct was the proper response. Over-enforcement could have sparked a riot sooner. Nonetheless, non-enforcement of liquor offences and motor vehicle offences had two consequences: a heightening of an atmosphere in which members of the crowd felt free to commit illegal acts and traffic congestion in the downtown Vancouver area.

54 Ibid. at p. 303.
56 One way in which this monitoring might be done is by way of plainclothes members throughout the crowd. Vancouver Police Department has policy in relation to such a function and we understand that limited use was made of the plainclothes function earlier in the day. We do not think it was utilized during the evening. We are of the opinion that it would have been a benefit had it been used. Monitoring, by officers trained to recognize the mood of the crowd and to spot agitators, may have helped police to determine enforcement decisions.
57 Ibid. p. 31.

R.18 That police ensure at the outset of an evening where a large gathering is expected that they have sufficient police officers in place on major intersections to enforce motor vehicle laws. Officers should be stationed as a preventative force rather than a reactive force. This will ensure the safety of drivers, their passengers and pedestrians, and prevent congestion that could result in the formation of an unruly crowd.

R.19 That police on crowd management duties be provided with very visible fluorescent vests identifying them as police officers.

C. ESCALATION OF POLICE RESPONSE

The escalation of police response, particularly the use of tear gas by police, raises three issues: Was it necessary? Was there sufficient warning? Could people escape from the tear gas? Prior to discussing these issues, it is necessary to digress somewhat and discuss a subject that was, in the media and elsewhere, of some concern: the fact that “the riot act was not read” on June 14th.

1. Reading The Riot Act

The media reported Chief Constable Canuel’s comment that “there was no opportunity to read the Riot Act” as if this was of some significance. The impression was that somehow the use of tear gas was inappropriate unless the Riot Act was read. Because of these impressions, we must discuss the significance of reading the Riot Act.

It is clear that when the portions of the Criminal Code covering riots are read together, “the reading of the riot act” is an archaic holdover from early English law, with very little relevance in the law today. The riot act need not be “read” in order for a riot to exist. The relevant portions of the Criminal Code include sections 63 to 69 inclusive and sections 32 and 33. Those sections define an “unlawful assembly” and a “riot,” prescribe penalties and provide justification for peace officers using force to suppress a riot. It is patently clear from a reading of those sections that a riot need not be declared in order to exist. Section 64 of the Code reads:

“A riot is an unlawful assembly that has begun to disturb the peace tumultuously.”
Section 63 defines unlawful assembly:

"63(1) An unlawful assembly is an assembly of three or more persons who, with intent to carry out any common purpose, assemble in such a manner or so conduct themselves when they are assembled as to cause persons in the neighbourhood of the assembly to fear, on reasonable grounds, that they

(a) will disturb the peace tumultuously; or
(b) will by that assembly needlessly and without reasonable cause provoke other persons to disturb the peace tumultuously.

In order for a riot to exist, therefore, three elements must be present:

- An assembly of three or more persons;
- They must have an "intent to carry out a common purpose";
- The assembly must have begun to "disturb the peace tumultuously." Tumultuous means chaotic, disorderly, clamorous or uproarious.

A review of the events of June 14 indicates clearly, in our opinion, that the first and third of these requirements were met. Establishing an "intent to carry out a common purpose" is more complicated, and may indeed turn out to be a litigious issue in criminal charges faced by those who have been charged in connection with the riot. A common purpose could be simply one of "disturbing the peace" or committing acts of vandalism. Because some cases stemming from the riot are still before the courts, it would not be prudent to comment further on this point.

If a riot is defined in the Criminal Code, what then is the significance of "reading the riot act"? A brief analysis shows that the provisions for reading the riot act are quaint and draconian. Because of their nature, the provisions have little, if any, applicability to today's society and a modern riot situation.

Found in section 67 of the Criminal Code, the provision for reading the riot act reads as follows:

"A justice, mayor or sheriff, or the lawful deputy of a mayor or sheriff, who receives notice that, at any place within his jurisdiction, twelve or more persons are unlawfully and riotously assembled together shall go to that place and, after approaching as near as safely as he may do, if he is satisfied that a riot is in progress, shall command silence and thereupon make or cause to be made in a loud voice a proclamation in the following words or to the like effect:

Her Majesty the Queen charges and commands all persons being assembled immediately to disperse and peaceably to depart to their habitations or to their lawful business on the pain of
Historically, the wording in our Criminal Code and the consequent duties imposed upon peace officers after the proclamation find their origin in the Proclamation under the Riot Act 1715 enacted in England at that time. When it was enacted, it served as a kind of martial law against rioters. Justices and their servants were indemnified for killing any rioter after the act was read; in other words, any level of force became acceptable. Similarly, after the act was read, it was not necessary to prove a specific act or intention; mere presence was enough to hang the accused.

The Canadian Criminal Code generally retains the historic wording of the original Riot Act, and the prescribed maximum penalty of life imprisonment for failing to disperse after the proclamation is read is a holdover from the original provisions calling for a penalty of death for failing to disperse. The maximum life penalty in such circumstances contrasts irreconcilably with a maximum penalty of two years for taking part in a riot as set out in Section 65 of the Criminal Code. Another holdover from early English law is found in subsection 33(2) which provides a blanket protection for peace officers and “persons lawfully required to assist” peace officers from both civil and criminal proceedings if they cause “any death or injury” to a person resisting them in their duty to “disperse or to arrest persons who do not comply with the proclamation” under section 67. Unlike other “justification” sections in the Criminal Code, there is no requirement that the amount of force used be reasonable or not excessive. The “duty” and “justification” sections correspond with the provisions in early English law that allowed any amount of force to be taken to suppress a riot.

The last reading of the Riot Act in Britain was in 1919. The Act itself was repealed there in 1967. Canada would do well to follow Britain's lead. Repeal of the “no longer applicable” provisions may avoid confusion in the future.

59 Ibid. p. 2.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid. p. 3.
2. Was the Use of Tear Gas Necessary?

In our view, the answer to the first question--Was the use of tear gas necessary?-- is “yes.” At the intersection, the situation had become unmanageable for the officers on duty, and the field commander, faced with a number of requests for assistance, some of them urgent, made the only possible decision in the circumstances by calling out the Crowd Control Unit. The appearance of the Crowd Control Unit, with batons, shields and helmets, is often enough to control a crowd. On this evening, it did not. Indeed, the crowd appeared unfazed by its appearance. Some challenged its authority by throwing projectiles at members and others began chanting “We Won’t Go!” The hostility of the crowd left the police with no option but to use tear gas in order to disperse it.

Tear gas is considered to be a lower level of force than the use of batons, and we believe that the level of force used by police in using the tear gas was appropriate and indeed, necessary, under the circumstances.

As there are diverse approaches to policing in the countries of the world, diverse reasons for crowds gathering, and diverse reasons causing crowds to disintegrate into misbehaviour and violence, there are diverse approaches to police tactics and crowd control throughout the world.

Many countries have had extensive experience with large crowds--far larger than the one that gathered in Vancouver on the 14th. Elections in India, for example, bring hundreds of thousands of people into the streets. Many European countries have also had extensive experience with what they call “football hooliganism,” violence associated with the game of soccer.

Because violence and misbehaviour in large crowds in many countries is expected, some countries have adopted approaches to crowd control that differ from ours, in that they expect the violence to occur. These approaches can range from a massive police presence to the use of dogs and/or horses to the use of anti-personnel weaponry to the use of military personnel and equipment to, if necessary, deadly force.

In determining an approach to crowd control, societies need to consider philosophical acceptability, resource limitations and the anticipated likelihood of force being required to deal with a crowd.
Based on Vancouver's limited experience with a riot of the type that occurred, we feel that the use of tear gas was appropriate. The likelihood of serious injury from the use of tear gas is far less than from other types of physical force.

Countries or cities that experience civil disobedience frequently may find that approaches other than the use of tear gas are more effective. Using dogs or horses for the purposes of crowd control is one approach, and both of these options are discussed below in the section of the report that deals with equipment.

To explore the various approaches to crowd control in various parts of the world is beyond the scope of this report. The Vancouver Police Department may wish, however, after the experience of the 14th, to draw on the more extensive experience of some other jurisdictions to determine whether modifications to its general approach to crowd control are warranted.

3. Warning about the Use of Tear Gas

Vancouver Police Department Policy establishes procedures for police intervention to disperse a crowd. Section 138(8)(b) reads as follows:

*Having decided that circumstances demand police intervention, the Field Commander shall:*

(i) determine the initial objective;
(ii) designate the specific area to be cleared and dispersal routes;
(iii) ensure there is sufficient personnel and equipment to accomplish objective;
(iv) brief all personnel on their responsibilities, squad formation, and the objective to be achieved;
(v) emphasize that dispersal of the crowd is the primary objective, not arrest action;
(vi) notify Headquarters of intended action;
(vii) inform the crowd of the decision. A prepared message is to be repeated; and
(viii) allow reasonable time for the crowd to voluntarily disperse.

Police attempted to warn the crowd but the noise of the crowd and the ineffectiveness of the loudhailer made it unlikely that anyone heard the warning. Police themselves admit that no one could have heard the warning.

"Why was there no warning about the tear gas? If someone had said, 'We are going to use tear gas; please clear the area!' maybe all the people who were not interested in trouble could leave and the crowd could become smaller and more manageable. I did not hear a single warning."
The Crowd Control Unit then did two things that could have been taken by the crowd as warnings: Smoke was released and tear gas masks were donned. These seemed to have no effect on the members of the crowd that could see the unit. Members continued to be hit with a barrage of flying objects.

In our opinion, if a more effective warning could have been given (perhaps at different locations close to the intersection where tear gas was to be dispersed) some people might have chosen to leave the crowd. However, our review of the videotapes just prior to the use of gas suggests that the crowd, in chanting “We won’t go!” over and over again, was aware that police wanted them to leave and that if they did not, the situation would escalate. A warning would have had a limited effect on them. Nonetheless, there may have been others in the crowd who were not aware of what was going on and who may have responded to a warning.

Police cameras were filming at the intersection from the tops of buildings. Perhaps these officers, being high above the crowd, should have had an effective means to communicate to the crowd.

It should be noted that the police are not legally required to warn the crowd prior to using tear gas. This is a matter of policy only; members attempted to comply with the policy, but were unable to do so.

Before leaving the discussion, the wording of subsection 32(1) should be set out. That section provides a justification for the use of force by peace officers in suppressing a riot. It reads:

"32(1) Every peace officer is justified in using or in ordering the use of as much force as the peace officer believes, in good faith and on reasonable grounds, (a) is necessary to suppress a riot; and (b) is not excessive, having regard to the danger to be apprehended from the continuance of the riot."

The subsection requires a subjective assessment—based on good faith and reasonable grounds—by the peace officer, of both the dangers of the riot's continuance and the level of force necessary to help suppress it.

We found the use of tear gas to be within Vancouver Police Department policy, the Criminal Code justification sections and accepted police practice in Canada.
4. **Dispersal Routes after the Use of Tear Gas**

When the Crowd Control Unit dispersed gas, regular officers on the street had no masks and could not assist. Furthermore, because of communications breakdown, regular members were unaware that gas was to be used. As a consequence of both these circumstances, squads were separated from their supervisors and were confused about where to direct the crowd and how to assist the Crowd Control Unit.

The lack of briefing of regular members on clearly established dispersal routes prior to the occurrence meant that some people in the crowd received conflicting instructions from different police officers, resulting in a feeling that they had been "trapped" by the use of tear gas:

"After the tear gas was used, I saw police directing people to get out of the area (the tension in their voices was high, but they were not violent about it) and directing emergency help services to where people were injured or overcome by tear gas. Once the crowd dispersed in my area, the police went on the defensive and did not aggravate the situation or go after stragglers."

"My daughter was downtown the awful night of the riot; she was not in the area of the middle of the riot but back a bit and, after talking things over with her, the one complaint that we have is that there seemed to be no way out of that mess. If there was, it was very hard to find."

In our opinion, most people were not actually in a position where they were unable to escape from the tear gas, but rather they were confused about which way they should go. The situation was exacerbated by the Crowd Control Unit having to split into two sections, and by having both the unit and the R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop, which could not communicate effectively with one another, dispersing tear gas at the same time. The effective use of loud hailers or loud speakers would have helped immensely, but equipment problems prevented this. Ideally, the Crowd Control Unit would not have dispersed tear gas until the regular members had received their riot equipment. However, at the time this was happening, there was almost a complete breakdown in communications. This will be discussed in the section on communications.

Because the Crowd Control Unit had to separate into two sections to disperse the crowd, it had to use more tear gas than might otherwise have been the case.

One important issue about the use of tear gas remains to be addressed and that is the complaint that people were sprayed with pepper spray or tear gassed "just for standing there." We have
been informed and we accept the fact that proper and safe police crowd control procedures require the street to be completely cleared. If people are allowed to simply move off to the side and stand in alcoves and so on, there is a danger they can come in behind the officers and attack them as they move in formation. Because the Crowd Control Unit was split in two and therefore had fewer members than would be ideal, and because it had, in the early stages, no way to protect its flanks until regular members had gas masks, members sprayed people in alcoves and doorways who "were not doing anything."

Some members of the Crowd Control Unit stated that, in their opinion, the masses of people who were not provoking them but would not move out of the street posed as much, if not more, of a problem to them than the people who were actually attacking them. As set out in the previous section, the use of loud hailers or a broadcasting system might have helped in clearing these people out of the way.

We found the difficulties of regular police officers, members of the crowd and the Crowd Control Unit after gas was dispersed were attributable to equipment and communications problems, and recommendations will be made in those sections.

D. COMMUNICATION

1. Overview of Normal Communications

Communication was a problem the evening of the riot. It is useful to provide a general overview of how police and emergency communications are normally handled. The report will then turn to the specifics of the evening of the 14th.

When a member of the public dials 911, that call is received at the Communications Center, which is located at the Vancouver Police Department. The Communications Centre receives 911 calls from all over the Greater Vancouver Regional District. The operator taking the call first ascertains the type of emergency being reported (Police, Fire or Ambulance) and then routes the call to the appropriate agency in the jurisdiction from which the call originates.

The City of Vancouver is broken into four districts for police patrol purposes. Each district uses one radio channel to communicate with officers on duty in that district. Each radio channel has its own dispatcher. When a 911 call for police in the city of Vancouver comes in, it is routed to the dispatcher for that district.
Each police car is equipped with a radio that allows two-way communication with the Command Centre. Each police car also has a “mobile data terminal” (MDT) onto which radio calls are typed as they are being orally transmitted over the radio. The MDT allows for communication between cars and communication between cars and the dispatcher. Normally, police officers each carry portable radios. Officers on motorcycle duty each have their own radio connected to a small microphone/speaker that can be attached to a jacket or shirt. Many of the supervisors also have cellular phones.

The R.C.M.P. uses different radio frequencies than does Vancouver Police Department. The radio of an R.C.M.P. officer does not allow for communication between that officer and a Vancouver Police Department officer.

2. Communications on June 14th-15th

On the evening of the riot, there were many differences from the “normal” state of police communications. The Command Center was established (in a different room from the Communications Center) and an extra channel, Channel 5, was assigned as the radio channel to be used for all crowd management and control activities. There were five separate radio systems in the Command Centre: the Vancouver Police Department Reserves, the Fire Department, the R.C.M.P. and B.C. Transit Security were all operating communications systems separately from the Vancouver Police Department system, but in the same room. This made for an overwhelming noise level in the room itself.

There were more than 200 police officers on regular police duties in the downtown area at the beginning of the evening, considerably more than the normal number that would be using a single radio channel.62 The number of police officers almost doubled before the night was over. With so many officers and so many incidents to be reported, this one channel was very busy.

Portable radios were in short supply, because of the number of officers deployed that evening, with one radio being shared between two officers. The noise level downtown, particularly at the intersection of Robson and Thurlow, was very high, and it increased steadily through the evening. Horns, whistles, screams, shouts and general crowd noise made it almost impossible for police officers to hear any radio communication.

62 Perhaps fifty officers might normally use one channel.
All these problems were compounded when officers put on tear gas masks, since this made it impossible for them to use their radios. Only the helmets of the R.C.M.P. Tactical Team contained radio receivers. The helmets of the Crowd Control Unit did not.

Police could not communicate with the crowd. The Vancouver Police Department had a hand held loud hailer and a police van equipped with a loud speaker. The police van was effective when it was used on Granville Street, but the crowd was far smaller there than it was at Robson and Thurlow. The loud hailer was ineffective with the noise level of the crowd. To compound the problem, the battery on the loud hailer, rendering it useless.

The R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop could not communicate directly with the Command Centre. Attempts at using a portable base station at the Command Centre were unsuccessful because the base station interfered with the other radio systems in the room.63 While the Tactical Troop waited to be mobilized, it was kept up-to-date at first through the radio of the Vancouver Police Department Inspector stationed with it, and through communication from the Command Centre through R.C.M.P. headquarters and back to the R.C.M.P. radios. When background noise negated the effectiveness of the radio, communication was primarily through the cellular phone of the Vancouver Police Department Inspector.

Failure to communicate effectively was a significant factor leading to confusion during the early and late evening on June 14th. The major problems hindering effective communication were the street and crowd noise and the types of radios used. Clear and concise two-way communication between the Command Centre and officers on the street was virtually impossible. Officers on the street could only be given instructions by speaking directly face-to-face. Cellular phones were of assistance, but only supervisors had these.

Lack of effective communication among the regular patrol officers, the Vancouver Police Department Crowd Control Unit and the R.C.M.P. created a problem for the regular patrol officers, as they were unaware of where the specialized teams were operating and were not informed in advance of the use of tear gas. They were unable to receive instructions from their supervisors and became separated from their squads.

63 We were also told that the tall buildings downtown prevented the base station from communicating with Tactical Troop radios.
At about 11:00 pm, people in the area between Burrard, Granville, Robson and Georgia Streets claimed different police units gave conflicting instructions to them. Lack of crucial communications between the R.C.M.P. Troop and the Vancouver Police Department Crowd Control Unit resulted in people moving in opposing directions and directly into the oncoming tear gas clouds of the two units. The conflicting directions given to the people by the individual tactical units added to their confusion and the feeling that they were "trapped." In many cases, we believe that there were escape routes available into sideroads and back alleys which no doubt went unnoticed by people struggling with the presence of police and tear gas. The limited communications ability of the R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop with the Vancouver Police Department was partially responsible for the department arrest team being temporarily left behind.

3. Recommendations Relating to Communication

R.20 That the Vancouver Police Department communications systems be upgraded to allow for appropriate communication between the Command Centre, regular police officers, specialized units and other agencies involved in crowd control.

R.21 That the City of Vancouver ensure it has an effective public address system to be used in crowd control and other security and safety situations. This equipment should be portable and adaptable to all types of vehicles including boats and helicopters.

R.22 That the City of Vancouver and adjoining municipalities work towards making their police and other emergency communications systems compatible with one another.

R.23 That all members of the Vancouver Police Department Crowd Control Unit be assigned helmets equipped with built-in radio sets.
E. POLICE TRAINING

There were two groups of police officers on duty on June 14th: those who had received intensive crowd control training (the Crowd Control Unit and the R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop) and those, comprising the vast majority, who had received very little, if any, training in crowd control.

1. Regular Officers

Vancouver Police officers receive their basic training at the Police Academy at the Justice Institute of British Columbia. All municipal police officers receive the same training; this does not include crowd control instruction. Since 1980, the Police Academy has provided basic training for recruits in the areas of offenses against public order, crowd behaviour and management, unlawful assembly, and arrest/control. In addition, regular Vancouver Police Department officers receive training in the use of the ASP baton and Oleoresin Capsicum pepper spray (OC spray). They do not receive training in the use of crowd control equipment such as gas masks and riot batons. Neither do they receive training as to what could be expected in facing a crowd, such as the noise level, verbal and physical abuse, and projectiles.

This lack of training meant that some members on duty that night, did not know how to fit their tear gas masks or how to breathe with them on. This, combined with the hostile energy of the crowd which was directed at the police, made for a frightening situation for many officers on duty. In our opinion, all police officers should have basic training in crowd control tactics and equipment. The Police Academy is the appropriate body to provide this training.

2. Crowd Control Unit and the R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop

The Vancouver Crowd Control Unit was formed in 1993 in preparation for the visit by President Yeltsin and President Clinton. To date 55 officers have been trained as Crowd Control Unit members and the standard operating procedure requires 32 officers to form a response unit. The purpose of the Crowd Control Unit is to respond to a situation where violence by a crowd may be anticipated. Conventional crowd control methods are generally directed at large groups of people who have committed or are about to commit acts of violence.

The Vancouver Police Department and the R.C.M.P. have appropriate training policies and procedures in place, and have specifically defined the training and operating standards for their respective crowd management units. These standards are similar to those of other major police...
forces in Canada and the United States. Both the Vancouver Police Crowd Control Unit and the R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop are fully trained and equipped in crowd control techniques, crowd psychology, the applicable laws, the use of tear gas, the use of riot equipment, and the use of force. When it was established, the Vancouver Police Department Crowd Control Unit was advised by senior members of the R.C.M.P.

The R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop trains with police dogs as an integral part of its operation. The Vancouver Police Department Crowd Control Unit does not use dogs.

The Emergency Response Team (E.R.T.) members, who work with the Vancouver Crowd Control Unit, are trained in the use of specialized weapons.

In our opinion, the Vancouver Crowd Control Unit and the R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop followed the established standards of training and acted in accordance with existing policies on the night of June 14, 1994. The tactics, manoeuvres and use of tear gas were in accordance with training standards and crowd dispersal procedures.

3. Recommendations Relating to Training

R.24 That regular patrol officers be familiarized with the tactics of the Crowd Control Unit, the effects of tear gas and basic crowd control methods.

R.25 That regular patrol officers receive training in crowd control theory, use of riot equipment and their role in supporting the Crowd Control Unit.

R.26 That the Justice Institute of British Columbia provide new recruits with two to four hours of riot training, including formations and the use of riot equipment, and that the necessary funding for this be provided by the provincial government.

R.27 That the Vancouver Crowd Control Unit train its officers to work with the appropriate anti-personnel armament rather than continuing the existing practice of using members of the Emergency Response Team.

R.28 That the Vancouver Police Crowd Control Unit and the R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop continue joint training in crowd control methods. Arrest teams should be trained to work with the R.C.M.P. tactical teams and with police dogs.
R.29 That the 12 municipalities policed by independent municipal police departments ensure they have current written protocols with the R.C.M.P. outlining joint training and operational requirements in situations of civil disturbances.

F. EQUIPMENT

1. Regular Officers

In the early evening, Vancouver Police Department police officers on duty were equipped as they are for regular duty: Issue sidearm (revolver), handcuffs, baton (ASP), OC spray (oleoresin capsicum) canister carried on the belt, and regular police hats (soft cover). Regular officers shared radios with their partners.

Reserve officers doing traffic duty had radios but no weapons. Motorcycle officers were equipped as regular officers with two differences that proved to be important as the night wore on: first, they had helmets and visors, and second, each traffic officer had his or her own radio with a microphone/speaker attached to the traffic officer's lapel thus allowing for easy use of the radio.

The field commander and deputy field commander each had portable radios and cellular telephones.

2. The Vancouver Crowd Control Unit

The equipment carried by the Crowd Control Unit included the following: Protective body equipment, approved helmets, respirators, OC spray, riot shields and riot batons. Members of the Crowd Control Unit do not carry sidearms when equipped for crowd control.

There are eight tear gas guns in the Crowd Control Unit, and unit members are trained in the use of tear gas and dispersal techniques. Two Emergency Response Team members equipped with Arwen guns carried sidearms and respirators, but no other riot equipment. The other Emergency Response Team members carried large canisters of O.C. spray and 9mm handguns, the normal weapon for Emergency Response Team members. The Crowd Control Unit commanders used cellular telephones and Vancouver Police Department radios to communicate with the Command Centre.
The R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop was equipped somewhat differently from the Vancouver Police Department Crowd Control Unit. Each member of the Tactical Troop is provided with protective body equipment, radio equipped helmets, respirators and OC spray. No member carries sidearms while on duty with the Tactical Troop. The front rank of the troop carry shields and riot batons. The second rank, who provide relief to the front rank, do not carry shields. Nine tear gas grenadiers carry approved projectiles for the tear gas guns.

3. Extra Equipment on Hand for June 14th

Section 138(6)(a) of the Vancouver Police Department Policy and Procedures Manual reads as follows:

Crowd control helmets, equipment and batons are stored in the Police Garage (upper west side). This equipment shall be:

(i) picked up by a member designated by an N.C.O., at the Police Garage. The crown control equipment key is to be obtained at the Public Information Counter;

(ii) drawn by each squad sergeant. The sergeant shall maintain a record of all equipment issued and to whom it was issued; and

(iii) the responsibility of the squad sergeant, who shall report the use of, loss or damage of the crowd control equipment by forwarding a Vancouver Police Department 68 to the Firearms Training Supervisor. The Firearms Training Supervisor shall conduct an inventory, as soon as practicable, of crowd control equipment after every use of the equipment to assure proper inventory and quality control.

The Vancouver Police Department experienced problems in getting extra equipment to its regular officers once the Crowd Control Unit had been deployed. Prior to the 14th, the department had ensured it had on hand 70 new riot helmets, shields, batons and gloves, and 135 respirators, 100 of which were on loan from the military. The plan called for the equipment truck containing this equipment to be delivered to the Number 7 Firehall. It arrived there about 10:30, but communications and other problems prevented the timely and organized distribution of the equipment. There was insufficient equipment in the truck to equip all members on duty and, as a consequence, extra riot equipment (which was inferior) was taken from the department and distributed later than would have been ideal. When squads showed up at the firehall, the equipment truck had already run out of equipment.
4. Discussion of Specific Equipment

a. Pepper Spray (Oleoresin Capsicum - Capstun)

OC spray is identified as one of the lowest lethal force alternatives. The spray contains 5% oleoresin capsicum and 95% propellant. The spray is an extract of cayenne pepper, which is inflammatory to the eyes and mucus membranes. It is typically sprayed from an aerosol canister and can also be deployed into a crowd by a grenade. It causes eyes to tear and close, which may also induce coughing, tearing, gasping and a burning sensation on the skin. The spray is effective immediately on most people and is considered to have minimal risk of serious injury. Treatment for a sprayed subject involves washing in plain water, and the effects of the spray wear off after a half hour to an hour. OC spray was adopted for use by municipal police departments in British Columbia after undergoing a testing process under the auspices of the B.C. Police Commission.

Members of the Crowd Control Unit had both individual units and large canisters. The individual units were found to be useful and effective, but the large canisters were not, because the spray fell to the ground before it reached its target.

b. Tear Gas

The Vancouver Police and the R.C.M.P. use CS tear gas for crowd control. Tear Gas is actually not a gas, but a white powder dispersed in several ways:

1. prepackaged containers, such as hand-thrown grenades;
2. small projectiles delivered by gas guns or the Arwen weapon;
3. spray from a pressurized container such as aerosol.

The effects of CS tear gas include an extreme burning sensation of the eyes, flowing tears, involuntary closing of the eyes, coughing and chest tightening, sinus and nasal drip, and extreme burning sensation on areas of moist skin, such as face, arm pits and groin. It will render the recipient incapable of aggressiveness while in contact with it for approximately 10-20 minutes. Of all the chemical agents available for crowd control, CS tear gas is found to be the most effective.

During the evening of the riot, the Vancouver Police Department discovered that some of its tear gas canisters were too old to be effective (they had expired). When tear gas ran out and new supplies were delivered to the R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop, some of it was the wrong type. More
tear gas was used than expected, because the Vancouver Crowd Control Unit split in two, and this was not normal procedure.

c. Arwen 37 Anti Riot Weapon

"I question the judgement of the police in using 'rubber' bullets as a means of crowd control. The situation must become extremely bad before taking actions which can cause permanent injury to individuals in the area. The potential for loss of an eye or other permanent physical injury to citizens within a crowd must not be taken lightly by the police" (from a member of the public).

The Arwen 37 rifle is a 37 mm barrelled and rifled weapon with a 5-shot rotary magazine. It is capable of accurately delivering plastic cylindrical batons, tear gas canisters and stun grenades.64 On June 14th, the two Arwen 37 weapons used by Vancouver Police Department Emergency Response Team members who accompanied the Crowd Control Unit together fired 25 rounds: about half tear gas canisters and half plastic batons aimed at people. One injury resulted from the use of the Arwen weapon that evening.

When the Arwen 37 is loaded with plastic batons, it is aimed at the torso area. It generally knocks the suspect over and incapacitates him for a period of time, thus allowing arrest and handcuffing. Experience of tactical teams using the weapon cite it as a useful less-than-lethal weapon because of its accuracy compared to similar weapons, its capability of firing second shots, its low lethality and its usefulness in being able to fire tear gas and stun grenades as well as rubber batons.65 In 1990, the B.C. Police Commission recommended that it be added to the inventory of tactical teams, with appropriate training on its use. The Vancouver Police Department’s Emergency Response Team members that use the weapon have been trained in its use.

There is a need, in our opinion, for a Crowd Control Unit to have some means to incapacitate a person whose actions may endanger others. The R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop, for example, encountered a person attempting to light a molotov cocktail but members felt they had no capacity to neutralize that person because no member of the R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop was equipped with an Arwen 37 or similar weapon. The attempt turned out to be unsuccessful, but not through any action by police. The importance of respecting agitators as “skilled alchemists” is

65 Ibid.
emphasized by riot study literature; there must be a means to remove those alchemists from a crowd in some circumstances.

 Agencies with field experience using projectile launchers reported that the typical result of a hit with a projectile from an Arwen 37 is "bruising with occasional fractures."\(^{66}\) Drawbacks to firing ballistic projectiles include concerns over accuracy and the fact that, until they have travelled a certain distance, the projectiles may produce unacceptable injuries.\(^{67}\)

We are concerned that the nature of an unruly crowd is such that firing a ballistic projectile weapon, such as the Arwen 37, with accuracy is very difficult. Crowd agitators rarely stand still and are not necessarily separate from the rest of the crowd, and members of the crowd are prone to unpredictable movement.

d. Batons

There are three basic categories of police batons: Straight batons, side-handled batons and expandable batons. Each of these can come in a number of lengths. Each type of baton requires different training.

On the 14th, the Crowd Control Unit and the R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop were equipped with long batons, specifically intended for riot control. The regular Vancouver Police Officers were equipped with expandable "ASP" Batons. When riot equipment became available to regular members, they obtained long batons as well.

We found that the long batons were used by the Crowd Control Unit and the Tactical Troop in accordance with their training. Regular Vancouver Police Department members, however, had never been trained on the long batons.

The ASP Baton is not suitable for crowd control, but officers used it when it was all they had available. We have concerns about the use of the ASP expandable baton in crowd control situations because of its inherent striking power and its weakness as a defensive aid.


\(^{67}\) Ibid.
e. Helicopter

The R.C.M.P. helicopter was on duty but was not as effective as it could have been because of communications problems with the ground. The Vancouver Police Department had an untrained spotter and the R.C.M.P. had a trained spotter in the helicopter, but the R.C.M.P. radio was not compatible with the Vancouver Police radios. Suggestions have since been made that the helicopter continue to be used, after the communications problems are worked out, and that the Vancouver Police Department train personnel to act as spotters. Another suggestion called for the helicopter to broadcast to the crowd or to use bright lights to disperse it. We raise these issues for consideration but make no recommendations on them.

f. Dogs

"The use of canines for crowd control is a very delicate subject among most law enforcement canine trainers and handlers, principally because of the stereotypes created by the inappropriate use of canines to suppress civil rights demonstrations during the 1960’s. These incidents created a great deal of adverse publicity and public opinion, much of which lingers to this day."68

It is important to point out that a “police dog” is trained to do certain things. A dog which has the job of detecting illegal drugs in packages, for example, is trained differently from one whose principal function is wilderness searching and tracking. So too with dogs that are involved in crowd control; they must be trained especially for that contingency and “only the most controllable of animals should be used in that capacity.”69 Crowd control training could be in addition to the training a dog receives for general police duty, but it must be specific to crowd control. Vancouver Police Department has a canine unit, but its dogs have not been trained for crowd control. It was therefore appropriate that the Department not use its dogs on the evening of June 14th. The dogs working with the R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop had received crowd control training. These dogs are used as part of that troop's standard operating procedures to protect its flanks.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police, in its model police policy on law enforcement canines, prohibits the use of canines for the control of peaceful demonstrations, but allows specially trained dogs to be used for crowd control only with the approval of the watch commander during riot conditions that cannot be controlled by other means. Their purpose is to

69 Ibid.
be deterrent in nature. Dogs are considered useful for working with tactical teams because tear gas has a limited effect on them.

The R.C.M.P. has a specific policy on the use of police dogs in crowd control in its Tactical Operations Manual. We have reviewed that policy and we believe that the use of dogs by the R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop was in accordance with R.C.M.P. policy. It was also, in our opinion, in accordance with the model policy prescribed by the IACP. Use of dogs proved to be invaluable to the R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop by preventing the troop from being outflanked.

At the current time, and with the number of disturbances experienced by Vancouver in the past, the department does not see the need to have its dogs trained for crowd control purposes. We would not interfere with that decision.

5. Equipment/Animals Not Used

a. Water Cannons and Fire Hoses

A committee of the B.C. Police Commission explored less-than-lethal force by police officers in 1990. The use of water cannons as a less-than-lethal force option was considered by that committee, but rejected for use here:

"The larger vehicle mounted water cannons (used in some parts of the world for crowd control) are a possibility for use by E.R.T.'s. E.R.T. personnel who we consulted in the United States advised that the water cannon was an expensive and unwieldy piece of equipment with far less utility than other E.R.T. options such as the ARWEN gun and stun grenades."71

In jurisdictions where water has been used, two problems have arisen: insufficient water supply and difficulties in moving the water equipment. In addition, the power of a water stream can inflict injury beyond an acceptable level when attempting to achieve crowd control.

We have made no recommendation about the use of water cannons or fire hoses.

b. Horses

Some of the letters submitted by members of the public suggested that horses could have been used to advantage by police during the riot. Horses are used extensively in many cities to assist in

70 Ibid.
71 B.C. Police Commission. op cit. p.23
crowd control and the public is aware that the Vancouver Police Department has a mounted squad. While the department has limited policy on the use of horses for crowd control, no horses were used on the 14th. Written policy reads as follows:

**Mounted Squad**

The Mounted Squad shall:

(i) not be used in conjunction with foot squads as a spearhead to assist in clearing an area unless authorized by the Field Commander. Avenues of escape must always be provided;

(ii) not be used for clearance purposes in confined areas, such as sidewalks in business districts; and

(iii) not be used for arrest action.

As with canines, horses must be trained and conditioned to be used in crowd control in order to be used effectively and safely for that purpose. If horses are used in crowd control, not only must the horses be trained and equipped specifically for that purpose, department policy must deal with issues specific to their use, such as riding over passive resisters in a demonstration and baton use by the mounted officer (an injury directed downward from a horse is much more likely to result in serious injury than when a baton is used by a non-mounted officer). To use horses and mounted officers that have not been specifically trained and equipped for the purpose of crowd control would likely result in an unacceptable level of injury to members of the public.

The cities that use horses to assist police have long histories of disturbances, and it is cost-effective and advantageous for them to train, equip, and maintain horses to be used in crowd control. Vancouver's history may not justify the cost necessary to properly deploy horses for crowd control purposes. On a historical note, horses were used by the Vancouver Police Department during the "Gastown riots" of 1971. In the inquiry held after that disturbance, it was recommended that police consider other methods of control before introducing horses.

We therefore make no recommendation about the use of horses by police for crowd control purposes.

6. **Recommendations Relating to Equipment**

R.30 That the use of plastic baton ammunition in the Arwen 37 weapon for crowd control purposes be reconsidered. The Arwen gun should be retained for use by the Emergency Response Team in hostage and similar tactical situations.
R.31 That the quality and quantity of equipment for use in crowd control situations be reviewed on a regular basis and specifically before an anticipated event to ensure that it is in good working order and that there is sufficient supply in accordance with any plans or procedures.

R.32 That the equipment truck remain in contact with and in close proximity to the Crowd Control Unit throughout deployment.

G. CONCLUSIONS ON POLICE RESPONSE

In general, we found that the police did a commendable job considering their lack of experience in dealing with an unruly, hostile crowd. There were only five complaints of misconduct filed against Vancouver Police Department officers; four of these were informally resolved and one was considered withdrawn because the complainant refused to cooperate with the investigation. None were filed against the R.C.M.P.

It was a difficult night for the regular police officers on duty. Most had never experienced a hostile crowd. They could not communicate by radio with their supervisors or other officers and some of them became separated from their squads. They had no training in the use of gas masks or the methods of the Crowd Control Unit. In spite of all this, most managed to keep calm and avoid overreacting. When officers could not find their squads, they simply joined other ones. This is not ideal, but it worked.

Many members of the public supported the police in their actions. Three such comments are replicated here:

"I cannot find fault with the actions of the police. They had the presence to keep the riot squads out of sight till after the trouble began, unlike the news media and their camera crews. While some may say that the police overreacted, I feel that it was clear that their actions were driven largely by fear for their own personal safety. This reaction was entirely justified under the circumstances." (Richmond resident)

"I relate this tale to you so that you understand the clear vantage point that I had of this situation, and the disbelief and sadness I felt in my heart. I'm writing to you to lend support to the City Police because unlike some of the people who will criticize the force, I was front and centre and I saw firsthand the need for action." (Delta resident)
"We believe that the Vancouver Police acted reasonably and responsibly. I suspect that a responsive force is not the police's first choice. If we had been 'pushed around' by the police on the way home, it would have been our fault as it should have been everybody's responsibility to leave a riot scene once a riot has started."

In concluding our remarks on police response, we note that the police are taking a strong enforcement stance, by attempting to identify and lay criminal charges against those who vandalized and looted on the evening of the riot. Research shows that when police take such a stance and publicize it, this works as a strong preventative measure.
PART FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS
PART FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The riot in Vancouver on June 14-15, 1994 provided an opportunity of sorts for all agencies, including the police, to assess their ability to respond to a large crisis. On the whole, considering the lack of recent experiences in Vancouver with a crisis of this nature, things worked well. Improvements can be made and our recommendations may assist in improving planning and response to the next large gathering.

Although the evening was difficult for all those on duty, there are incidents of people helping other people or the police that show that not all those downtown were bent on destruction. Some examples of these incidents are:

In the early evening when the crowd was unruly but not unmanageable, fights were often broken up by members of the crowd.

Before tear gas was dispersed, video clips show members of the crowd trying to stop others from throwing things and lashing out at police officers.

One officer reports that a man ran out of the crowd at Robson and Thurlow and threw a full wine bottle that smashed on the head of an officer standing there. The other officers, thinking the red wine was blood, were justifiably concerned about the officer’s safety and tended to him. As the assailant ran into the crowd, a member of the crowd punched him in the face and he and other members of the crowd assisted in bringing him out to the police for arrest.

Another officer states he saw a molotov cocktail start a small fire in a store. A woman from the crowd removed her coat and started beating out the flames.

There were many reports of people “standing guard” by broken windows to ensure the contents of the store were not looted. These people often did not even know the store owners. A media camera captured a group of people, hands held to form a ring around an open store window. The camera operator asked one of the women in the ring if it was her store. She said, “No, but this is bullshit!” referring to the crowd’s unruliness. The look on her face showed disbelief and anger at the crowd’s behaviour.
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations Relating to Planning:

R.1 That the Vancouver Police Department incorporate into its planning process a method by which to calculate the number of officers that should be deployed for crowd control. Included in the method should be such factors as anticipated size and makeup of crowd.

R.2 That the Vancouver Police Department incorporate into its planning process a traffic management plan that anticipates traffic problems when a major street is closed for a special event.

R.3 That the City of Vancouver, in cooperation with other city, municipal and provincial agencies, establish an appropriate emergency operations centre in the downtown core which will properly accommodate all necessary user groups and which would include appropriate technology and communications equipment sufficient to properly manage emergency situations in the lower mainland area.

R.4 That when planning for anticipated crowd control problems, such as occurred on June 14th, attention be paid to possible liquor abuse situations and that representatives of the Liquor Distribution Branch and the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch be involved as appropriate.

Recommendations Relating to Alcohol Consumption:

R.5 That at all major spectator sporting events, including those viewed on a wide-screen television, security personnel be required to check patrons for possession of alcohol when entering the stadium or viewing theatre.

R.6 That at all major spectator sporting events, including those viewed on a wide-screen television, the sponsor be required to provide an adequate police presence at its expense.
R.7 That at all major spectator sporting events, including those viewed on a wide-screen television, security guards and police remove alcohol from those people who are openly drinking in the stands.

R.8 That appropriate measures be taken by police and security personnel on duty, as well as representatives from the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch, to ensure that Section 45 of the Liquor Control and Licensing Act (not permitting a person to become intoxicated) is enforced at major spectator sporting events where alcohol is available for purchase.

R.9 That consideration be given by the police departments of the municipalities surrounding Vancouver to undertaking spot checks of vehicles coming into Vancouver during major special events and celebrations in the City of Vancouver.

R.10 That when government liquor outlets are asked to close early, consideration be given by the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch to making similar arrangements for beer and wine stores and off-premises sales in licensed establishments.

R.11 That on evenings of major sporting events in the areas where overconsumption in licensed premises can be anticipated, the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch should ensure strict monitoring by representatives of the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch of licensed premises. When violations are discovered, the Branch should penalize violators to the full extent of the law.

R.12 That on evenings of major sporting events in the areas where overconsumption in licensed premises can be anticipated, the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch should consider the use of Section 24(1) of the Liquor Control and Licensing Act to attach special conditions to the liquor licenses of drinking establishments in the areas.

R.13 That B.C. Transit ensure it has sufficient security staff, including Special Provincial Constables, on duty on evenings of major spectator sporting events to adequately enforce provincial legislation and SkyTrain policies related to the use of alcohol on the system.
R.14 That consideration be given by municipal police in the jurisdiction of major SkyTrain stations to have a visible presence on evenings of major spectator sporting events where the abuse of alcohol is anticipated.

Recommendations Relating to the Media:

R.15 That in the future when dealing with events where large crowds are anticipated, the Vancouver Police Department media liaison person be apprised by the Field Commander of potential problems anticipated during the evening so that an appropriate media approach may be developed; the media relations person should focus on downplaying any “party” atmosphere and portray the event as peaceful and quiet.

R.16 That consideration be given to seeking the cooperation of the media in not locating their cameras in a fixed position. If the cameras remain in a fixed position (for the safety of media personnel, for example) attempts should be made to make them as inconspicuous as possible.

R.17 That all local media outlets be asked to develop and adopt a code of conduct to govern their videotaping of large crowds.

Recommendations Dealing with Police Response in the Early Evening:

R.18 That police ensure at the outset of an evening where a large gathering is expected that they have sufficient police officers in place on major intersections to enforce motor vehicle laws. Officers should be stationed as a preventative force rather than a reactive force. This will ensure the safety of drivers, their passengers and pedestrians, and prevent congestion that could result in the formation of an unruly crowd.

R.19 That police on crowd management duties be provided with very visible fluorescent vests identifying them as police officers.
Recommendations Relating to Communication:

R.20 That the Vancouver Police Department communications systems be upgraded to allow for appropriate communication between the Command Centre, regular police officers, specialized units and other agencies involved in crowd control.

R.21 That the City of Vancouver ensure it has an effective public address system to be used in crowd control and other security and safety situations. This equipment should be portable and adaptable to all types of vehicles including boats and helicopters.

R.22 That the City of Vancouver and adjoining municipalities work towards making their police and other emergency communications systems compatible with one another.

R.23 That all members of the Vancouver Police Department Crowd Control Unit be assigned helmets equipped with built-in radio sets.

Recommendations Relating to Training:

R.24 That regular patrol officers be familiarized with the tactics of the Crowd Control Unit, the effects of tear gas and basic crowd control methods.

R.25 That regular patrol officers receive training in crowd control theory, use of riot equipment and their role in supporting the Crowd Control Unit.

R.26 That the Justice Institute of British Columbia provide new recruits with two to four hours of riot training, including formations and the use of riot equipment, and that the necessary funding for this be provided by the provincial government.

R.27 That the Vancouver Crowd Control Unit train its officers to work with the appropriate anti-personnel armament rather than continuing the existing practice of using members of the Emergency Response Team.

R.28 That the Vancouver Police Crowd Control Unit and the R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop continue joint training in crowd control methods. Arrest teams should be trained to work with the R.C.M.P. tactical teams and with police dogs.
R.29 That the 12 municipalities policed by independent municipal police departments ensure they have current written protocols with the R.C.M.P. outlining joint training and operational requirements in situations of civil disturbances.

Recommendations Relating to Equipment:

R.30 That the use of plastic baton ammunition in the Arwen 37 weapon for crowd control purposes be reconsidered. The Arwen gun should be retained for use by the Emergency Response Team in hostage and similar tactical situations.

R.31 That the quality and quantity of equipment for use in crowd control situations be reviewed on a regular basis and specifically before an anticipated event to ensure that it is in good working order and that there is sufficient supply in accordance with any plans or procedures.

R.32 That the equipment truck remain in contact with and in close proximity to the Crowd Control Unit throughout deployment.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


55. ______. Special Summary Report on the Toxicology of CN, CS, and DM. Gaithersburg, Maryland.


71. Liquor Control Act, R.S.A. 1980, January 1, 1994, C. L-17, s.97(2).


111. ______. "Offences and Offenders in Football Crowd Disorders." British Journal of Criminology, VOL. 20, NO. 3 (July 1980), 276-288.


NEWSPAPERS
(in chronological order from most recent)


"Hippie PlaqueRecalls Gastown Riot," The Vancouver Sun, August 9, 1993.


"Police Presence, Media Spotlight Tame Street Festival," The Vancouver Sun, November 7, 1991.

"City's History was Marred by Violent Race Riot," West Ender, January 17, 1991.


"Police Battle Rock Throwers at Stadium," The Vancouver Sun, June 14, 1988, p.A3.


"A Look at our Grey Cup Heritage," The Vancouver Sun, February 25, 1985.


"Doing Violence to their Cause," The Vancouver Sun, October 22, 1981.


"Sea Festival to Continue Despite Fracas," The Province, Vancouver, July 14, 1980.

"Delta Police to get Camera for Use in Riot Situations," The Vancouver Sun, May 6, 1977, p.C7.

"Rocks, Bottles Hurled at Police as Burnaby Party goes Wild," The Vancouver Sun, July 12, 1976.


"45 Arrested at Out-of-Hand Parties," The Vancouver Sun, June 26, 1976, p.11.


"Youths Fined $1500," The Vancouver Sun, April 12, 1973, p.22.


"Fisk Fears Rock Concert Future," The Vancouver Sun, June 8, 1972, p.71.


"PNE to Consider Rock Concert Policy," The Vancouver Sun, June 6, 1972, p.33.

"They Were Cool and Very Brave," The Vancouver Sun, June 6, 1972.

"2 Youths Denied Immediate Bail," The Vancouver Sun, June 6, 1972, p.33.


"Police Battle Mob at Stones Concert as Firebombs, Rocks, Bottles Hurled," The Vancouver Sun, June 5, 1972, p.1,7B.

"Judge Lambastes 'Modern Savages','" The Vancouver Sun, August 1, 1970, p.1,2.


"Sea Festival Hit for Dance Riots," The Vancouver Sun, July 16, 1970, p.20.


"Third Street Clash Erupts in West End," The Vancouver Sun, July 15, 1970, p.1,2.


"I Have a Lump on My Head," The Vancouver Sun, July 15, 1970.

"Festival Cancels Street Dancing," The Vancouver Sun, July 14, 1970, p.1.


"English Bay Row Brings 10 to Court," The Vancouver Sun, July 15, 1969.

"West End Riot Follows Dance," The Vancouver Sun, July 4, 1969.


"Halloween Riots Rock 7 Centres," The Vancouver Sun, November 1, 1968, p.25.

"Music Fans, Police Clash," The Vancouver Sun, September 9, 1968, p.27.
"North Shore Heads for Another Halloween Riot," The Vancouver Sun, May 6, 1967.

"Eight Get Stays in Grey Cup Case," The Vancouver Sun, February 2, 1967.

"Cup Crowd Described as Biggest Ever," The Vancouver Sun, January 30, 1967, p.7.


"Average Cup RIoter -- Westside Man of 29," The Vancouver Sun, January 19, 1967.

"‘Cup’ RIoter Found Guilty," The Vancouver Sun, January 16, 1967.

"Cup cost Taxpayer $11,000," The Province, Vancouver, December 16, 1966, p.8


"Grey Cup Riots: Our Methods and Goals Conflict," The Vancouver Sun, December 3, 1966, p.6.


"Beef Up Riot Unit with Mountie Aid," The Vancouver Sun, November 28, 1966, p.1,2.

"It Must Not Happen Again, Officials Warn," The Province, Vancouver, November 28, 1966.

"Riot Arrests to Clog Courts; Warrants Out for Absentees," The Vancouver Sun, November 28, 1966.


"300 Arrested in Cup Binge," The Vancouver Sun, November 26, 1966, p.1.

"Ranew Felled by Bat in Cap Stadium Riot," The Vancouver Sun, May 12, 1966, p.25.

"The Thud of Violence..." The Vancouver Sun, December 3, 1963, p.4.

"Cup Violence Takes Over Field, Street," The Vancouver Sun, December 2, 1963, p.1,2.


"39 Policemen and Jobless in Hospital after Battle at Post Office," The Province, Vancouver, June 20, 1938, p.11,12,13,16.
"Sunday's Riot," The Province, Vancouver, June 20, 1938, p.4.


"Police Rout Strikers at Vancouver Pier; Thousands in Riot," The Vancouver Sun, June 18, 1935, p.1.

"19 Arrested; Riot Act Read; Strikers' Clash," The Vancouver Sun, April 24, 1935, p.1.

"Riot Act Last Read in 1912 Powell St. Clash," The Vancouver Sun, April 24, 1935, p.1.

"Police Clash with Rioters at C.N. Dock," The Province, Vancouver, February 21, 1933, p.16.

"Riot at Docks," The Vancouver Sun, February 21, 1933, p.7.

APPENDIX A

MAPS
This map shows the route taken by the Vancouver Crowd Control Unit. At the intersection of Robson and Thurlow about 10:30 p.m., gas was deployed. The Unit, separated in two portions, moved in opposite directions along Robson Street. Both portions of the Unit acted separately until just before midnight, when they were reunited and worked as one Unit clearing Granville Street. The location of Bute and Robson, where a man was hit in the head by a shot fired by an Arwen weapon about 10:45, is marked with an "x".
This map shows the route taken by the R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop. It started movement along Georgia from Burrard Street slightly before 11:00 p.m.
APPENDIX B

CONTRIBUTORS
APPENDIX B - CONTRIBUTORS

In the course of conducting the study, the researchers interviewed representatives from government agencies and corporations, businesses, and the media. They are listed below. We wish to acknowledge their contributions towards a fuller understanding of the events of that night. If we have inadvertently forgotten to mention any contributor, we apologize.

In addition, we wish to express our gratitude to those private citizens who took the time to share their thoughts and concerns in writing with the Commission. Their comments about the riot were constructive, thoughtful and helpful to the study.

Government Agencies and Corporations:

- B.C. Emergency Health Services (Ambulance)
- B.C. Place
- B.C. Transit
- Canada Place - Security and Administration
- Liquor Control and Licensing Branch
- Liquor Distribution Branch
- Motor Vehicle Branch
- Pacific National Exhibition
- Robson Law Courts Security/Administration
- R.C.M.P. - Division Headquarters
- R.C.M.P. Tactical Troop
- Simon Fraser University - School of Criminology
- SkyTrain
- St. Paul's Hospital - Emergency Department
- Swedish National Police - Stockholm, Sweden
- Vancouver City Management
- Vancouver Emergency Planning
- Vancouver Engineering
- Vancouver Fire Department
- Vancouver Police Department

Businesses:

- Downtown Business Association
- Eaton's
- Hotel Association Security
- Hotel Vancouver
- Robson Street Business Association
- Theatre Row Businesses (Granville 700-1000 Block)
- The Bay
- Vancouver Canucks - Marketing and Communications
The Media:

- BCTV - News
- CBC - Evening News
- UTV Camera Operators