

## Olympic Games — a prime example of co-operative police efficiency

*One year ago this month, Montreal was in a festive mood. Some called it Olympic fever. To millions of people, foreigners and Canadians alike, the Games of the XXI Olympiad are still remembered vividly and the excitement of those last two weeks in July will not fade quickly.*

*One of the reasons for the success of the Games was the vast amount of work done in the area of security. Some people say the expense of the Games, including the sophisticated policing arrangements was not justified, but the experience gained by the several security forces working in close-co-operation towards the same goal was a lesson of inestimable value. The following article, in commemoration of the Games, is a tribute to their efficiency:*

The 1976 Olympics in Montreal last summer was the first occasion in Canadian history that police from a number of jurisdictions, as well as military and immigration officials, had worked together to plan total security.

To assess the possible sources of terrorist threats, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police prepared "country profiles" with information on subversive organizations in each foreign country. With the passage of the Temporary Immigration Security Act, the entry of potential terrorists could be restricted as they could be turned away at border points without reason. A computerized Olympic Integrated Lookout System was created, consisting of the names of 27,000–28,000 known terrorists, some 18,000 microfiche records, and a list of stolen passports cleared through Interpol. Within ten seconds, travellers crossing border points could be identified without arousing suspicion. An accreditation program was instituted for the purpose of identifying all people involved in and around Olympic sites, and each person involved in the event, whether official, athlete, VIP or delivery man, had to wear an identification card about his neck. For foreign athletes and officials, this served as a passport, allowing clearance through customs, Olympic Village and security check points.

Security corridors were set up, and through these Olympic participants were transported from point A to point B. Such security tended to give the impression that police were concealed behind every bush and corner. This was not, in fact, the case, but the psychological advantage was overwhelming. Essentially, the corridor consisted of "sanitizing" — checking from stem to stern — all buses in which



athletes travelled. Once checked, the buses were never left unguarded and, together with one police escort, the same two officers, who conducted the search, would accompany athletes to their destination. By the close of the Games, the RCMP had clocked some 85,000 miles on their patrol vehicles in escorts alone.

In order to ensure the effectiveness of security operations, a number of "conflict games" or enactments of possible situations were conducted over a two-year period. These were capped by a three-and-a-half day major exercise sponsored by the Solicitor General and designed to test plans, procedures, communications and command and control of the total security force, and included involvement of federal and provincial ministers and senior officials.

A few days before the Games, a peri-

meter of nine to ten miles was established around Olympic Stadium and all planes were prohibited from flying within that radius. Calculations were also made to determine such things as: how long it would take an aircraft travelling at supersonic speeds to reach the stadium after detection; how long it would take to make a decision to destroy the aircraft if need be; and the location at which the wreckage would come to earth. Measures were also adopted to deal with a potential disaster if the damaged aircraft found its way into an urban centre.

### Lighter side

Some of the problems encountered during the Olympics were more amusing than serious. For instance, after the theft of the Soviet flag from its pole in Olympic Village, the Montreal Police Force curtailed further efforts of that sort by having firefighters grease each and every flagpole in the stadium between 12 and 24 feet. Just as firefighters were greasing the last pole, a scream was heard as someone who had managed to climb up a pole made a hasty and obviously unplanned 12-foot descent. To some, the extensive security at the Olympics may have seemed oppressive. However, within a few days after the Games started, it was apparent to all that there would be no violent disturbance.

People marvelled that they could safely walk the streets of Montreal late at night, and while pickpockets and "scalpers" were still active, crime in the city decreased 20 per cent during the Games. People relaxed and the city enjoyed a time of carnival for the duration of the Games.

If the safety and success of the Games alone were not sufficient reason to justify expense and planning, Director of Contingency Plans Development, Lionel Cloutier feels the experience gained by the various police forces in working together to achieve a desired end was an invaluable lesson.

Mr. Cloutier said: "Security and police forces have the same problems everywhere. Planning and working together, the forces contributing to public safety and security during the Olympics, have in a way never previously envisaged, established a sound basis for future multilevel and multi-jurisdictional co-operation."