



## NEWS RELEASE

British Columbia Civil Liberties Association  
September 22, 2009

For immediate release

### **RCMP witness endorses civilian investigation model**

**Vancouver, B.C.** – RCMP Superintendent Wayne Rideout, a key witness in the inquiry into the death of Robert Dziekanski, became the latest high profile individual to endorse civilian investigation of police involved deaths for policy violations or criminal issues. The BCCLA has long held that police should not investigate themselves when it comes to these matters, but has rarely had public endorsement of this model by law enforcement officials.

“We [the RCMP] are not perceived publically to be able to investigate ourselves. I think the perception. . . is unwinnable,” said Supt. Rideout in his testimony who suggested a hybrid model of police and civilian investigators. He continued: “While the [civilian] Special Investigation Unit [in Ontario] is a model, it took many years to get workable in practice, but from a perception level it needs to happen.”

BCCLA President Robert Holmes agrees with Rideout. “It is important to hear this perspective from front line officers,” said Holmes. “We’re occasionally accused of being ‘anti-police’ or overly critical for saying that the police should not investigate themselves, but the truth is that we’re on the side of many officers who would rather be relieved of this conflict of interest.”

Minor amendments to the Provincial Police Act are currently before the provincial legislature, but the amendments only deal with police discipline issues, not criminal conduct, and the Act still has police investigating fellow police officers, even in cases of in custody deaths.

“It seems that the movement towards civilian investigation of police misconduct is gaining momentum,” said Holmes. “We’re calling on the Solicitor General to remove his proposed Police Act amendments and replace them with a model that conforms to the Frank Paul Inquiry recommendations that civilians investigate serious disciplinary defaults and possible criminal conduct. The time for reform is now.”

#### **MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Robert Holmes, President, (604) 838-6856  
David Eby, Executive Director, (778) 865-7997