



## Readers Viewpoints

### Regina police fail to recognize problems

I read with interest the Leader-Post editorial of Feb. 9, headlined "Promises from Regina's police", in which you commented on the new objectives of the Regina City Police.

A few days prior, I had participated in a community forum at the Cathedral Area Community Centre which was planned to discuss concerns regarding policing in our area. The Cathedral Area Community Association directors should be commended for organizing such a

discussion, which was a followup to an earlier meeting which Regina Police Chief Ernie Reimer attended.

The three policemen who attended the subsequent meeting were all senior-level administrative personnel who will be, of necessity, prominent players if the "promises" are to be fulfilled.

It is because of that fact and the attitudes I saw those policemen display that I do not share your optimism that the stated goals are anything more than lip service.

It was made abundantly clear by these men that they regarded holding such discussions with members of our community as a waste of their time. I found them to be extremely defensive, while denying that prejudice and racism are serious problems on the force or even personally for themselves. I was disappointed to hear this denial of the obvious, as it makes any confrontation of such problems impossible.

I think anyone who lives in Regina understands that we have serious problems with prejudice and racism, and that it is logical that police officers, who are part of our community, would exhibit similar traits, likely magnified because of work experiences.

During our meeting, it also became clear that these policemen displayed a high degree of paranoia about the community they are supposed to serve. They described a situation in which they "have their sources" and are involved in a high

degree of surveillance of many citizens.

I sensed there was actually a "moving away" from being involved with community, toward a "watching" of community, in order to be able to strike with force against any person who began to question the oppression of their lives.

I was also dismayed by the deputy chief's statement that they "were not interested in the situation at Oka because that is 2,000 miles away from here". I say that because the police here assisted in paying for an advertisement in The Leader-Post which condemned the Mohawks for their struggle for justice. I might add that the advertisement was rejected by some newspapers, including The Globe and Mail, because of its content.

Finally, what I find most disconcerting is the last line of your editorial, which states, "The very stating of the goals should be reassuring to a community that, apart from relatively rare rifts and ripples, has enjoyed and benefited from a long, smooth relationship with police."

I find neither the mere stating of these goals, nor the outright denial of obvious problems to be reassuring, and I ask that Regina police commissioners accept their responsibility in ensuring that these promised changes become reality so that all Regina can "enjoy and benefit from a smooth relationship with its police".

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