

The crime prevention approach adopted by the Committee is not a conventional one, nor does it yet engage the efforts of numbers in any way commensurate with those involved in traditional crime control programs. Yet the challenge it represents is aptly expressed in the following metaphor of Henry David Thoreau:

There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the roots.

This report represents the Committee's unanimous view, developed in light of the testimony it heard. The following section sets out the crime situation in Canada as described in official statistics for 1991 and in a national crime victimization survey conducted in 1988. The costs and impact of crime are then discussed. This is followed by a description of the characteristics of the offenders who are responsible for most breaches of the law. Finally, the proposed approach and measures to enhance community safety and the federal role in crime prevention are examined.

## CANADIAN CRIME IN 1991<sup>7</sup>

The Committee is in agreement with the witnesses who stated in their submissions that crime levels in Canada are unacceptably high.

In 1991, the crime rate (number of *Criminal Code* offences per 100,000 population) in Canada was 10,736 offences, representing a 9% increase over the previous year's rate. This was the third consecutive year in which an increase was recorded. *Criminal Code* offences accounted for 84% of all offences reported to police. Violations of federal and provincial statutes and municipal by-laws comprised the remaining reported offences.

Canadian crime is, in the main, a problem of property loss and damage committed by males; that is the majority of non-highway offences are crimes against property rather than crimes of violence, and the majority of those charged with *Criminal Code* offences are male.

Sixty percent (60%) of all *Criminal Code* offences known to police in 1991 were property crimes, while 10% were crimes of violence. The remaining *Criminal Code* offences include mischief, bail violations, disturbing the peace, etc.

Between 1981 and 1991, there was a significant increase (65%) in violent offences. The increase reflects both an actual increase in crimes of violence and a greater willingness on the part of victims of violence, particularly violence that occurs in the home, to make reports to the authorities. In fact, while past research has found that men were more likely to be victims of violent crime,

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<sup>7</sup> Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, *Canadian Crime Statistics 1991*, Cat, 85-202, Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, Ottawa, 1992.