

C. Funding

Witnesses told the Committee that the federal government's commitment to crime prevention must be buttressed by financial resources to help establish local crime prevention committees to coordinate programs and services and implement local crime prevention strategies. They indicated that there are a number of initiatives at the municipal and provincial level that address crime and fear. In order for the safer communities approach to expand however, federal support is needed.

It was pointed out that a key aspect of the safer communities approach is the more cost-effective use of existing social programs and services through coordination and integration. Additional funding will nonetheless be required to support new initiatives and to ensure that some existing local strategies can be continued.

According to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities we could "spend smarter" on crime prevention initiatives if funding decisions were made in consultation with representatives of local crime prevention councils and funds were channelled into these infrastructures to ensure that program dollars are going to meet real community needs. (70:23)

Mindful of the federal government's limited fiscal capability to fund new programs, it was recommended by witnesses that funds for crime prevention be allocated from the proceeds of crime and from a reallocation of funds within the federal government. When the Solicitor General appeared before the Committee, he advised that consultations have been undertaken with municipalities and provinces to share the money realized from forfeited proceeds of crime. The Committee agrees with the Minister's position that there should be a fair and equitable sharing of forfeited proceeds between the various jurisdictions involved. However, the Committee also believes that these consultations provide an ideal opportunity to build in the allocation of at least part of these proceeds for crime prevention activities, by all those who receive a share of the monies. As well, the Committee agrees with the recommendation that 1% a year of what is currently spent by the federal government in the criminal justice system be put into prevention over five year period. At the end of five years, Canada would have 5% of the current federal criminal justice budget devoted to prevention.

The Committee agrees with the sentiment expressed by Serge Bruneau, of TANDEM, Montreal. He stated:

Crime prevention should not be perceived as an expenditure, but rather as an investment. (70:43)

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that a share of the monies forfeited as proceeds of crime be allocated to crime prevention activities and that the federal government allocate 1% a year of the current federal budget for police, courts and corrections to crime prevention over a five year period. At the end of five years, Canada should spend 5% of the current federal criminal justice budget on crime prevention.