

Bill C-89 was originally welcomed and supported in principle by all parties. Some have suggested that it does not go far enough — that it should include a statement of principles, and that it should be mandatory for police to inform victims of their rights to restitution/compensation, to prepare a victim impact statement for the court, and to be kept informed about the status of the investigation and court proceedings. The major criticism of Bill C-89 was that the proceeds of the victim fine surcharge are to be turned over to the provinces without any guarantee that these funds actually will be used to provide victims with more and better services, and that non-residents of a province will also be eligible for services. Waller recommended that Bill C-89 be amended to provide, in the proposed section 655.9(4) of the *Criminal Code*, that:

- surcharge revenues not be used to supplement money that the provinces [/territories] have already committed to victim assistance;
- provinces establish a more comprehensive network of victim services available to non-residents and residents alike; and
- surcharge revenues be used in a manner consistent with a statement of principles agreed upon by the federal and provincial [/territorial] governments.

In the Committee's view, these concerns can be addressed without legislation.

The Committee recognizes that, although there are increasing numbers of victims' compensation programs and victim services across Canada, the value of benefits available under them, as well as the scope and availability of services, varies from one province to another. However, the Minister of Justice has advised the Committee that federal-provincial discussions are contributing to the development of national standards, and that the Ministers responsible for criminal justice have now reached agreement on a policy statement of principles.

## **2. The Provision of Information to Victims**

Almost all studies of victims highlight victims' informational concerns as their highest priority. **In the Committee's view, participants in all stages of**