

Women's fear is perhaps the most pervasive and widespread cost of violence. More than 50% of women in urban areas are afraid to walk on their own streets at night. It is an intolerable situation when women cannot use and enjoy facilities for which they have paid with their taxes.<sup>22</sup>

## FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CRIME

Studies conducted in Canada, England and the United States have found that a *minority* of male offenders are responsible for the *majority* of all crimes committed. Lorrain Audy, President of the Quebec Association of Police and Fire Chiefs and Director of the Hull Police Force, described to the Committee research findings showing that 80% of crimes are committed by approximately 20% of offenders. And the repeat offenders, with few exceptions, use drugs. (78:9)

Self-reports and arrest records of offenders who have long criminal histories tend to reveal that offending began when they were very young and that their offending became progressively more violent. A significant proportion of persistent young offenders become the adult offenders of the future. According to Dr. Marc LeBlanc, with the School of Psychoeducation, at the University of Montreal, half of the youths who appear before the youth justice system become criminals as adults. (75:5) Moreover, Dr. Tom Gabor, a criminology professor with the University of Ottawa, estimates that about 75% to 80% of incarcerated adults were persistent offenders in their youth. (75:29)

Concern about rates of youth crime, especially crimes of violence, was expressed by a number of witnesses. They pointed to crime statistics showing that over the four-year period 1988 to 1992, the rate of violent crime charges heard in youth court (excluding Ontario and British Columbia) increased by 34% in Canada. Moreover, nearly half of the young offenders charged in 1990-91 were recidivists.<sup>23</sup> These statistics, and media reports that tend to over-represent violent crimes relative to their occurrence,<sup>24</sup> have created widespread feelings of insecurity among Canadians towards young people. In 1990, 47% of Canadians felt that the behaviour of young people had "become worse" in the past five years. The percentage of the public expressing this view in 1993 had increased to 64%.<sup>25</sup>

Practitioners working with persistent young offenders have found that by the time some of them are twelve years of age they have been involved in anti-social activity for a number of years, often before they reached adolescence and before the justice system became involved with them. In its written submission to the Committee, the Canadian Criminal Justice Association (CCJA) indicated that it is possible to identify the young people who are likely to become adult offenders. The CCJA wrote:

Statistically speaking, a 10-year-old boy identified by teachers as troublesome is more likely to become delinquent by the age of 13, which makes him more likely to be convicted by the age of 16, and so on until the age of 25. It is more than platitude to say that causes of adult criminal convictions can be traced back to childhood. (p. 8)

<sup>22</sup> Report of the Standing Committee on Health and Welfare, Social Affairs, Seniors and the Status of Women, *The War Against Women*, 3rd Session, 34th Parliament, June 1991, p. 13.

<sup>23</sup> Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Vol. 12, No. 16, (September 1992).

<sup>24</sup> Julian Roberts and Michelle Grossman, "Crime Prevention and Public Opinion", *Canadian Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 32, No. 1, January 1990, p. 79.

<sup>25</sup> Maclean's/CTV Poll, (4 January 1993), p. 24-26.