

## APPENDIX O

TO: UBCM Members

FROM: Justice & Protective Services Committee

DATE: September 3, 1996

RE: **HOPE FOR THE FUTURE**  
**A NEW APPROACH TO YOUNG OFFENDERS**

*ITEM #7(e)*

September 18, 1996

*BC COMMUNITIES AGENDA*

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### INTRODUCTION

The UBCM would propose that a new approach be adopted toward dealing with young offenders and that these changes be incorporated into the Young Offenders Act (YOA) and the programs associated with it.

We would suggest that this new approach should focus on:

- needs of the community
- needs of the victim
- needs of the youth

We need to focus on problem solving, on obligations to the community and on the future - What should be done?<sup>1</sup>

Local government would suggest that we need to restore the concept that crime is an act against another person and the community, not simply an abstract idea - a violation against the law.

Crime must be recognized as having both individual and social dimensions of responsibility. We need to focus on taking action to repair the harm and restoring the harmony of the community.

The emphasis must be placed on the role of the community and the victim in resolving the crime.

Before outlining what local government is proposing. We need to take a moment to look at where we are and where are current policies will take us.

#### **What is the problem?**

Today we appear to be faced with:

- increasing costs of crime;
- increasing concern by the community about crime.

#### **1. Cost of Crime**

In general terms the cost of crime is estimated as follows:

- spending on police services, the courts, legal aid and corrections reached \$9.7 billion in 1993/94, an increase of 13% in constant dollars since 1988/89.<sup>2</sup>
- indirect costs of crime (property loss, security services, insurance frauds, crime-related hospitalization and volunteers) is estimated at \$6.7 billion annually.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Bazemore, Gordon and Umbrent, Mark, "Rethinking the Sanctioning Function in Juvenile Court: Retributive or Restorative Responses to Youth Crime" *Crime & Delinquency*, July 1995, pp. 302-303.

<sup>2</sup>"Safety and Savings: Crime Prevention Through Social Development", Economic Analysis Committee, National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC), March 1996, p. 2.

- it is estimated that the total cost of crime could range as high as \$46 billion annually.<sup>4</sup>
- estimates of the annual cost of incarcerating an adult range from about \$40,000 a year to almost \$80,000.<sup>5</sup>
- inmates in federal institutions are incarcerated for an average of 44 months, representing an expenditure of more than \$160,000 per person.<sup>6</sup>

In the case of youth, the costs are as follows:

- in 1991-92, Canada incarcerated about 4,800 youth;<sup>7</sup>
- the estimated cost of detaining a young offender is at least \$100,000 per year;<sup>8</sup>
- in 1992-93, the total expenditures on custodial services for youth in Canada was \$487 million.<sup>9</sup>

The trends would suggest that these costs are going to increase as we move into the 21st century.

## **2. Community and Crime**

In general terms there is growing belief in the community that crime is increasing and local communities are not safe. This belief appears to be supported in the polls:

- Successive polls have reflected our fears and anxiety about crime: 50% of Canadians feel less safe than they did five years ago; 48% of Canadians believe violent Crime is increasing; after unemployment, crime was viewed by Canadians in one poll as the most important issue of the day.<sup>10</sup>
- Canadians are 50% more likely than Europeans and 500% more likely than Japanese to be victims of burglary, assault, sexual offences and robbery.<sup>11</sup>
- One in four Canadians admitted that they were victimized by some kind of criminal act during the year, although most of the acts were not brought to the attention of the police.<sup>12</sup>

In the case of youth, the community sees the following trends:

- *Youth involved in violent acts and gang group activity are becoming younger in age; many are still in elementary school.*
- *School Boards are reporting an increase in verbal and physical assaults on teachers.*
- *Possession of weapons, particularly knives by young persons is increasing. Many youths feel they need weapons for protection.*
- *Some youth violence is becoming more intense, random and vicious, often with little evidence of a premeditated plan to hurt the victim, or serious provocation.* <sup>13</sup>
- A poll taken in 1993 found that 64% of Canadians believed that the behaviour of young people had “become worse” in the past five years, this was up from 47% identified in a 1990 poll.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>NCPC, March 1996, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup>NCPC, March 1996, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup>NCPC, March 1996, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup>NCPC, March 1996, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup>Brantingham, P. and Easton, S. T., *The Crime Bill: Who Pays and How Much?*, The Fraser Institute, 1996, p. 29.

<sup>8</sup>NCPC, March 1996, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup>Brantingham and Easton, p. 29.

<sup>10</sup>NCPC, March 1996, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup>NCPC, March 1996, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup>Brantingham and Easton, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup>“Youth Violence in British Columbia - Is There A Problem”, Tri-City Area “Together Against Violence” Committee, an Issues Committee of the Society for Social Development.

Whether in reality crime is increasing and our communities are no longer safe is not clear, but it is what many people perceive to be happening. We need to address this belief.

## **YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT**

### **Why was the Young Offenders Act established?**

The implementation of the federal Young Offenders Act (1984) has resulted in a more formal and legalistic youth justice system. Many more young people are being charged and incarcerated - for longer periods - under the Young Offenders Act than was the case under the Juvenile Delinquents Act (1908).

The Young Offenders Act introduced in 1984 was intended to take problem youth away from the criminal system. There was concern that under the Juvenile Delinquents Act that youth were being put in prison with hardened criminals and the opportunity to rehabilitate them was diminished.

The main features of the Young Offenders Act can be summarized as follows:

- a system of separate and specialized youth courts and correctional programs was created;
- a statement of principles setting out the objectives of the Act is provided:
  - Young people should be held accountable for their behaviour although not necessarily in the same way as adults;
  - The public must be given the necessary protection from criminal behaviour;
  - The justice system should recognize young peoples' special needs and should offer guidance and assistance;
  - Young people have the same rights as adults in law.
- all provinces are required to comply with the uniform age range (12 to 17) for determining the application of the Act
- those under twelve are not to be dealt with by the criminal justice system, but rather by child welfare authorities according to provincial welfare legislation.

Amendments were made to the Young Offenders Act in 1986, 1992, and 1995 in response to public concerns that it deal more effectively with violent youth.

### **How has it failed?**

The Young Offenders Act has generally:

- downplayed the responsibility and accountability of the offender for his actions;
- failed to acknowledge the victim in dealing with the crime;
- ignored the concerns of the community or the role that it might play in addressing the crime.

The focus of the YOA has tended to be on the institutional needs of the justice system, rather than on the individuals involved - the personal tragedy. It has become an impersonal and abstract process designed to meet:

- the need to ensure the rights of the offender have not been violated under the law;
- the needs of the prosecutor for more time to collect evidence;
- the needs of the judge for more court time to hear the case;
- the needs of the defence lawyer for time to prepare the case.

All of these needs are real, but it has resulted in a backlog of court cases and the inability of the justice system to deal in a timely and effective fashion with the needs of the community, the victim or the youth.

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<sup>14</sup>Corrado, Raymond R. and Markwart A., "The Need to Reform the YOA in Response to Violent Offenders: Confusion, Reality or Myth?", *Canadian Journal of Criminology*, July 1994, p. 346.

Local government would agree, with the observations put forward by the CRY Foundation and others, that the YOA and its application by the court has failed the community in the following ways.

1. *It does not deal adequately with youths when they first run afoul of the law. The deterrents are not strong enough to dissuade many of them from further criminal activities.*
2. *When youth do commit serious, violent crimes, the consequences do not fulfill the community's expectations for fair justice or protection.*
3. *It does not adequately address parental responsibility for the actions of their children.*
4. *When conscientious, responsible parents do attempt to become involved in the process, they are thwarted at every turn.*
5. *The legal process for young offenders is far too slow to have any real corrective value.*<sup>15</sup>

The YOA in its current state lacks the financial resources and tools to rehabilitate the offender and it is unable to respond in a timely manner to punish the offender.

The Vancouver Safer City Task Force, for example, in its hearings heard the following comments from the public:

*“that many young offenders were being sentenced too leniently. It was reported that young people often brag at school of having been to Court and laugh at the treatment they receive there. Moreover, reported cases indicate that organized criminals and similar people coerce young people into committing serious, and often violent, crimes on the understanding that they will be treated leniently. Sentences for young offenders must reflect general deterrence and protection of the public.”*<sup>16</sup>

## **COMMUNITY SAFETY APPROACH**

The UBCM would propose a two dimensional approach that is directed toward the safety of the community and the impact of crime on it. It is an attempt to provide a balance between the needs of society and each individual member.

The intent of this approach would be to ensure that the community was provided with the services necessary to assist youth with problems, but at the same time require that the ‘youth’ and the ‘parents’ be held accountable for acts committed against the community. The focus would be on the following:

### 1. Social Infrastructure

Outlined below, are examples, of programs which would need to be implemented under this process:

- Youth at Risk Programs
- Family Counseling/Parenting Classes
- Youth Programs
- Alternative Sentencing

### 2. Safety Infrastructure

Outlined below, are examples, of policies that would need to be implemented by the courts to ensure community safety:

- Zero tolerance for violent crimes
- Compensation to the victim from ‘youth/parents’ for property crimes
- Direct responsibility by ‘youth/parents’ for criminal actions
- Sentences linked to criminal actions
- Sentences linked to community impact and victims concerns

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<sup>15</sup>“The Canadian Youth Justice System & The Young Offenders Act: Some Observations and Recommendations for Change”, A Brief to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs, The C.R.Y. Foundation, September 1995, p. 8.

<sup>16</sup>Safer City Task Force, Final Report, City of Vancouver, January 1993, p. 216.

The resources to undertake this new approach should be reallocated from the existing \$9.7 billion dollars that we currently spend on the justice system - including the \$100,000 a year we spend to incarcerate youth each year. The funding needs to be provided on a long term basis.

### **What needs to be changed?**

We feel that a multi-disciplinary approach needs to be taken. An approach which works with the:

- youth
- victims
- teachers
- police
- social workers
- community
- parents/guardians and family
- councillors
- probation officers

The focus needs to be on crime prevention and on long term programs designed to build a sound foundation for the future. A process which:

- coordinates intervention (corrections, police, community services education and health programs). Child and youth Committees coordinating youth services at the local level.
- provides alternatives to custody for non-violent offenders;
- encourages more family and parental involvement in proceedings.
- encourages victim involvement in proceedings.

The current short term projects do not foster the development of a sustainable process. As was pointed out by the Vancouver Safer City Task Force in its report *“the best way to reduce crime is to stop it from happening in the first place, through social development and education. The judicial system is used when all else has failed and the crime has been committed.”*<sup>17</sup>

The justice system needs to deal with cases in a timely fashion. The decision as to whether or not a youth should be directed into an alternative process or how the victims needs should be addressed cannot be delayed.

In the case of a serious offender, the court must give more weight to the protection of the community, and deal with the young offender appropriately in light of the crime that has been committed.

The approach needs to focus on three key issues:

- community safety
- accountability and responsibility
- timely application of justice

### **SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

The first step in the two dimensional approach proposed by local government is to ensure that the community has the tools or access to the tools to respond effectively. We would point out that the local community cannot implement this process in a meaningful way without the financial support and program assistance of both the federal and provincial government.

The resources need to be made available to the community to respond in a multi-disciplinary way to potential youth crime problems. The focus needs to be on the identification of “at-risk” youth and the action needed to prevent future criminal activity from taking place. Practitioners working with youth have suggested that:

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<sup>17</sup>Safer City Task Force, p. 216.

*“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 the causes of adult criminal convictions can be traced back to childhood.”*<sup>18</sup>

The process of identifying “at-risk” youth is not new. What local government is proposing is a new approach to deal with the problem in the community. Local government is proposing a process to coordinate and focus the programs delivered to “at-risk” youth and to fund them on a long term basis so that they can have a meaningful impact. A more integrated and coordinated system of service delivery between social services and the youth justice system, for example, in Quebec has resulted in a per capita rate of new youth court cases that is 65% below the Canadian average.<sup>19</sup>

We are suggesting that the YOA needs to focus on social development and the prevention of crime. Some programs already exist in communities, but they have little or no resources and are poorly coordinated - if additional assistance or an added level of programming is needed there is no way of obtaining it.

Studies have suggested that 50% or more of the youths who appear before the youth justice system become criminals as adults.<sup>20</sup>

Local government is proposing that the federal government re-allocate 10% of the resources that it is currently spending on justice programs to community based programs focused on potential problem youth and their families in a direct effort to prevent crime.

Some examples of programs that have worked elsewhere are:

- **Youth at Risk Programs**

Research has indicated that early identification of children at risk and an early response to the problems can have a positive response. For example, the Perry Preschool Program, that was developed and implemented in Michigan in 1962, indicated that the community benefited tremendously. Compared to a no-preschool group, the preschool group were found to have:

- 50% fewer arrests;
- 33% more high school completions;
- higher earnings and property wealth.<sup>21</sup>

A cost-benefit of analysis of the Perry School Project suggested that for every \$1 invested in a one-year program, there was a potential return of \$7 to society. This estimate is based on what it might otherwise have cost the community in services to look after these children.<sup>22</sup>

- **Family Counseling/Parenting Classes**

Family support, parent training and early intervention programs are estimated to reduce child abuse by as much as 50%.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>“Crime Prevention in Canada: Toward A National Strategy” Twelfth Report of the Standing Committee on Justice and The Solicitor General, February 1993, p. 8.

<sup>19</sup>Corrado and Markwart, p. 370.

<sup>20</sup>Crime Prevention in Canada: Toward A National Strategy, p. 8.

<sup>21</sup>“Preventing Crime by Investing in Families: An Integrated Approach to Promote Positive Outcomes in Children”, National Crime Prevention Council, June 1996, p. 11.

<sup>22</sup>NCPC, March 1996, p. 4.

<sup>23</sup>NCPC, March 1996, p. 3.

A 1992 study by Corrections Canada indicated that one in three inmates had been violent toward their partner or children and almost half had themselves been a victim of abuse as a child or adolescent.<sup>24</sup>

- **Youth Programs**

A study in two Lansing, Michigan neighbourhoods found that crime went down by 60% after police, local schools and social service agencies opened a neighbourhood centre and launched an extensive youth development program.<sup>25</sup>

In Fort Myers, Florida, a program called “Success through Academic and Recreational Support” was responsible for reducing the juvenile crime rate by 30%.<sup>26</sup>

- **Alternative Sentencing - community program**

The UBCM would like to highlight two alternative programs that have been undertaken in British Columbia - in Maple Ridge and Sparwood. We would suggest that YOA must promote and encourage the development of these types of programs in the future.

These two programs illustrate the important role that the community can play to reduce crime.

### **Maple Ridge**

The Maple Ridge Program was begun in mid-1994. The program has the following objectives:

1. To deal with charges promptly;
2. To increase the youth’s awareness of the way in which his or her actions has affected the victim;
3. To let the youth and his family know that the community as a whole is concerned about this conduct.
4. To provide for restitution where appropriate.
5. To follow up on an individual basis.
6. To involve the community in the solution.
7. To leave the youth with a feeling of self-worth.

A ‘Youth Conference Committee’ has been established by the community. The Committee is designed to involve the whole community in addressing youth crime - service clubs, businesses, churches etc. The Committee works directly with Crown Counsel, the local probation officer and the RCMP.

Crown Council determines on the basis of the case which youth are to be referred to the Youth Conference Committee. Only first time non-violent offenders are considered for the diversion program.

The Committee meets privately with the parents and the youth. On the basis of this meeting and information provided to it from Crown Counsel and the probation officer the Committee decides what punishment would be suitable from a community perspective. A mentor from the community is assigned to each youth to supervise the completion of the assignment. The intent is that:

*“The Committee will endeavour to tailor each consequences to the youth involved and the crime committed. When restitution is called for, he or she will be placed with a suitable participating business at minimum wage and his/her earnings used to pay the restitution. At the same time, he or she will receive individual attention and instructions. There will be one-on-one follow up to ensure an assignment is completed. If other problems surface, the youth and/or his/her family will be referred to other community agencies.”*<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>NCPC, March 1996, p. 7.

<sup>25</sup>NCPC, March 1996, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup>NCPC, March 1996, p. 3.

<sup>27</sup>Youth Conference Committee, Ridge Meadows Youth & Justice Advocacy Association.

A diversion agreement is signed which may include any of the following: restitution, apology, writing an essay, volunteer service work, attending counselling, visiting a secure facility etc. The diversion agreement is a contractual arrangement between the youth, parent or guardian and Crown Counsel. If the agreement is not fulfilled Crown Counsel may decide to proceed with the charges.

The communities interest in undertaking this program was to:

- see young offenders dealt with rapidly;
- free up court time for more serious offenders to also be dealt with more quickly;
- save taxpayer's dollars;
- assist parents and families with problems;
- build a more closely knit community with old time friendliness and involvement.

The program to date has reduced the time for dealing with the young offender to 15 days rather than 30 days or more through the courts. In the short time the program has been operating it has had a 95% success rate.<sup>28</sup>

### **Sparwood**

The Sparwood program was initiated in 1995. The program has eight objectives:

- divert young offenders from the traditional court system;
- provide victims with an opportunity to participate actively in the process of seeking reparations;
- arrange compensation, where appropriate, for material damage or loss;
- make offenders aware of the consequences of their behaviour;
- make young offenders accept responsibility for their behaviour;
- involve the family and close friends of a young person whose behaviour has offended in the process of dealing with the consequences of that behaviour;
- involve the victim, their families and close friends, if appropriate, in the process of dealing with the consequences of youth offenses;
- lay the foundation for a gradual restoration of trust between all persons affected by the young person's offence.

The program involves a two stage process. Under the first stage the investigating officer is encouraged, in minor and appropriate cases, to attempt to deal with the young person informally, in consultation with the victim, such as taking them home to their parents and explaining the problem to the young person's family.

In cases that are more serious the second stage of the process may be recommended by the investigating officer and approved by the NCO in charge. In this case, with the general acceptance of all the parties concerned, a 'Resolution Conference' is organized. The purpose of the conference is to explore the impact of the incident on everyone affected and to determine the appropriate punishment.

The conference involves a professional facilitator, the youth, the victim, and family and friends of both parties. Any other persons involved with the youth or family in the community may also be involved, such as social workers, probation officers, service workers or teachers. The outcome of the conference is to:

1. attempt compensation to the victim;
2. levy a consequence on the young person;
3. deliver services to the family where necessary;
4. establish a monitoring program of the young person to ensure compliance.

At any stage of the process, the youth has the option of electing to not participate, and go through the traditional court system. If agreed upon measures are not being complied with by the youth, the police have the option of forwarding a report to Crown Counsel, recommending charges be laid.

Both of these programs focus on the:

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<sup>28</sup>Youth Conference Committee.

- need for the community to be involved in addressing the crime;
- need for the concerns of the victim to be dealt with;
- need for the youth to take responsibility for his or her actions and be held accountable for the consequences.

In both of these programs the human dimension of the crime is clearly recognized - the personal tragedy - and the need for the community to play a role in restoring the peace and harmony.

## **2. SAFETY INFRASTRUCTURE**

The second step in the approach proposed by local government is to ensure that the courts give more weight in its decisions to the protection of the community when a young offender is brought before it.

Ideally the social infrastructure will minimize the need for further action, however, in the event that a crime is committed, particularly a serious crime, then the safety infrastructure will protect the community. The purpose of the safety infrastructure is to ensure that there are direct consequences for the action and appropriate punishment.

The focus of the safety infrastructure is to deal primarily with youth who:

- are repeat offenders;
- have committed violent crimes (murder, rape etc.).

Once a youth has violated another individual's rights it must be made clear that there are consequences for taking that action and the safety of the community is to take precedence.

- **Zero tolerance for violent crimes**

There needs to be clear recognition in the YOA that violent crimes (murder, rape etc.) are to be dealt with directly by the courts. There should be no option for consideration of alternative measures. The priority in this case is to ensure that the community is safe from future attacks by the youth. The decision to be made is whether or not the crime warrants the youth being raised to adult court.

The anonymity of the young offender should be removed when a violent crime has occurred. The community has the right to know the identity of a violent offender, whether the offender is a youth or an adult.

In the case of a violent crime the YOA should apply to youth 10 years of age and older.

- **Compensation to the victim from 'youth/parents' for property crimes**

The victim should not be further victimized by being forced to incur financial hardship as a result of a property crime. For example, a program in Italy reimburses the victim where theft has occurred and ensures the property is fixed (door and locks replaced etc.).

Where a young offender has damaged or stolen property the emphasis should be placed on ensuring that any expenses incurred by the victim are re-imbursed. The parents/guardian should pay for the full cost of any property damage to the victim or the destruction of any public property, particularly where the youth is too young or the costs are so great as to make full repayment by the youth impractical.

The YOA needs to clearly identify that the 'youth and/or parents/guardian' will be directly responsible for all costs related to the crime and that this applies no matter what the age of the offender.

- **Direct responsibility by 'youth/parents' for criminal actions**

The youth must be required to take responsibility for his actions and where appropriate required to undergo mandatory treatment.

The parents/guardian must be directly involved in any decisions made in how to address the problem with the youth. The courts must be willing to deal with the action in a timely manner and operate in a fashion which will promote greater involvement by the parent/guardian (i.e. night courts etc.).

The parents/guardian must be held accountable for the actions of their children. If the parents/guardian have been negligent in supervising - or raising - their children, they should be held responsible for their actions.

- **Sentencing be linked to criminal actions**

We do not want a repeat of the situation in California where more money is being spent on building prisons than on building schools, but we want to ensure that it is clear that ongoing and repeated criminal activity will not be condoned by the community.

Today the lack of punishment is a perceived weakness of the current legislation from the community perspective. If the punishment for the crime does not reflect the impact of the crime on the victim or on the community, the result is that there appears to be little or no consequences for violating another persons right to live without fear.

The YOA needs to ensure that the few youth who come before it with records of continuous and ongoing criminal activity are dealt with appropriately with the objective of ensuring that the community is safe from future criminal activity.

- **Sentencing be linked to community impact and victims concerns**

The courts in sentencing the youth must take into serious consideration the affect that the incident has had on the victim and where appropriate ensure that the victims concerns are dealt with.

The court must give more weight to the safety of the community, to ensure that the public feels safe walking the streets or leaving their homes after dark.

## **CONCLUSION**

Today there is an increasing concern in the community about crime and the safety of the community.

The trends we see in the community today, particularly if the United States can be seen as an example, will result in an:

- increase in youth crime;
- increase in the victims of crime;
- increase in the cost of crime to the community;
- more police officers; and,
- more prisons.

Our current approach to the Young Offenders Act does not appear to be working very well and we would suggest it is leading us in the wrong direction. The existing process neither provides the resources to rehabilitate the offender or effectively punishes the offender.

The UBCM is proposing that a new approach be adopted to the Young Offenders Act and the programs associated with it. An approach that attempts to balance the needs of the community, the victim and the youth.

An approach which focuses on the values and obligations that each of us have to our community.

An approach with focuses on the safety of the community.

An approach which focuses on the needs of the victim for assistance and acknowledgment of the harm that was done.

An approach which focuses on the need for the youth to take responsibility for his actions and be accountable for the consequences.

An approach which can be accomplished and is illustrated in the programs underway in British Columbia in the communities of Maple Ridge and Sparwood.

The UBCM is proposing a two dimensional process which focuses first on the development of the social infrastructure needed in the community to deal with the problems which are faced by “at-risk” youth and their families, and secondly on the creation of a safety infrastructure designed to protect the community from criminal activity.

This approach would coordinate social service, education, health and justice programs delivered in the community in an effort to build a safer community and would require a long term financial commitment from the federal and provincial government to implement.

The resources needed by the community to respond in a multi-disciplinary approach to potential youth crime problems would be reallocated on a long term basis from the existing \$9.7 billion dollars that we currently spend on the justice system and use to incarcerate youth each year.

The outcome of this approach would be to ultimately save the taxpayer money. The resources that are used would be directed in a positive way to prevent crime, rather than as a negative response to crime. The courts would be used as intended to punish offenders when community safety is at risk.

Under this new approach the focus of the Young Offenders Act and the message that it would deliver to the public is the following:

- the important role of the community in restoring and maintaining peace;
- the important role that the victim has in determining what happens to the offender and that the offender will repay the debt incurred from the harm caused;
- the important role of the family in determining what happens to the offender;
- the important role that the youth has in understanding and taking responsibility for the harm that he has caused to the victim by his actions;
- the important role that the justice system has in ensuring that the offender is dealt with in a timely manner and that the safety of the community is maintained.

The overall objective of the Young Offenders Act would be to:

- promote community safety;
- promote accountability and responsibility of youth to the community; and,
- promote the timely application of justice in the community.