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**Subcommittee on Solicitation Laws of the  
Standing Committee on Justice, Human Rights,  
Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness**

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**Chair**

**Mr. John Maloney**

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•(1820)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. John Maloney (Welland, Lib.)):** Order, please. I'd like to call the meeting to order.

This is the 32nd meeting of the Subcommittee on Solicitation Laws, which is a subcommittee of the Standing Committee on Justice, Human Rights, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

Our witnesses this evening, from the New Opportunities for Women Canada Society, are Mr. Doug Lang and Ms. Catherine William-Jones.

Generally we have a presentation of roughly ten minutes—I understand that you're going to do five and five—followed by questions from our panellists for a seven-minute round. Then we go to a three-minute round until our time has expired.

I'd ask Mr. Lang to start. Thank you very much for being here this evening.

**Mr. Doug Lang (Director, New Opportunities for Women Canada Society):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I just wish to thank the honourable members of the committee for inviting us to attend tonight. It is our pleasure. And we bring greetings from Vancouver, B.C., where the weather is sunny and warm. Well, it's a little rainy.

In any case, we wanted to spend a few minutes with you tonight reviewing some of the issues that are no doubt before you with regard to the solicitation laws and perhaps the amendments to them in the near future. We have broken them down into several points. I'm going to start with control and regulation.

The legalization of solicitation and prostitution will increase prostitution and thereby increase the number of women and children in the sex trade industry. As an example, in Victoria, Australia, the number of legal brothels doubled, while illegal prostitution went up 300% once it was legalized there.

The drug-addicted street trade workers, who I'll refer to as STWs, will continue to work the street due to cultural differences. It's my belief, or our belief, that these predominantly women and children are unable to visualize the next day due to drug addiction, never mind reporting for work at a brothel. These STWs are at the lowest end of the prostitution food chain and will never join the ranks of the elite sex trade worker.

Youth will continue to be a desirable element of the trade and will be in very high demand. Notwithstanding the legalization of the sex trade industry, these underage children will not be registered as sex trade workers due to the current Criminal Code provisions and the will of Canadians not wishing to see our children exploited by adult men. As a result, these youngsters will be regulated to work secretly. Make no mistake, there is a significant market in the sex trade industry for underage children by socially misfit adult men who prey on our children in Canada.

Second generation sex trade workers will continue in the profession due to the significant influence of their mothers. Recently, in Kelowna, B.C., a sex trade worker mother who worked the streets for 12 years to support her daughter put her child out on the street so that 12-year-old could support the family. If mothers are placing their children at risk while prostitution is illegal, it is very likely that legalizing solicitation and prostitution will encourage significantly more bizarre behaviour, thus placing Canadian children at significantly increased risk.

We'd like to see an improvement in the prosecution of pimps and those who prey on women. The legalization of prostitution will seriously convolute police investigations and create a much more difficult standard of proof for several reasons.

First, the police may treat complaints from legal prostitutes as simply an inevitable part of their chosen profession, and that attitude may be reflected as "they should know better".

Secondly, the prosecution of pimps will become more difficult with the legal argument being placed before a judge. These prosecutions are already extremely difficult under current legislation where there is no legal trade defence.

Thirdly, the legalization of soliciting and prostitution in Canada will provide pimps with a special status, one of legitimate businessmen and women. This has happened in European countries such as the Netherlands. This status not only makes prosecutions more difficult, but it promotes the exploitation of our youth and women in general.

The protection of minors is an issue. For the most part, minors will be forced, as they are at present, to work underground. They will be prohibited from legalized arenas. The effective way to protect our children is to provide early intervention education programs for the sex-trade-prone families, not by making poor examples of their mothers who are caught up in the destructive lifestyle of the sex trade industry.

Legalized solicitation, prostitution, and brothels will send the wrong message to Canadian children: that prostitution is an admirable, safe, and desirable occupation and is an acceptable work environment to aspire to. With the legalization of solicitation laws, Canadian children who routinely wish to mature early will be encouraged to take up this new-found legal work opportunity, rather than continue in school, simply to make as much money as quickly as possible.

The future of the sex trade industry is also an issue. Where will this slippery slope of liberalization of solicitation and prostitution law take us? Will there be an education program for Canadian youth in the sex trade industry? Will government encourage the youth of our country to improve and hone the skills required to be a successful sex trade worker? We wonder where it might end.

This is, of course, not likely, and it's unacceptable, but what is there for a sex trade worker today? There should be programs of education, rehabilitation, drug dependency, safe exiting, and treatment available for them. Currently there are few such programs offered by our governments. This large gap in Canada's social safety net is usually filled by not-for-profit agencies such as New Opportunities for Women and others across our nation. Governments need to be supporting these educational, preventive, and rehabilitative programs rather than sinking money into legalizing one of the most destructive lifestyle choices a young woman can make.

On the issue of combating criminal activity related to prostitution, how will drug use be abated by opening brothels and legalizing prostitution? Both genders will remain drug dependent, whether legalized or not. Practitioners do require some drug use to compensate for the very unnatural activities repeatedly required of them. Pimping will remain a problem, as only 25% of women in Canada who are in the sex trade industry are free from the control of pimps.

The state will tax sex trade workers. The state will charge some fees for using facilities at one point. Who then is the exploiter? Who will be paying for the new profession of prostitutes? Will the state or will the taxpayer want to join and support prostitution in their neighbourhoods? Somebody has to pay for the maintenance of brothels.

Last is the issue of safeguarding the human rights of prostitutes and sex trade workers. If legalized but not regulated by the state, prostitution will not be removed from high-visibility locations such

as street corners. Sex trade workers are not a work group who are easily manipulated. They are street-savvy and independent thinkers. A portion of them will refuse to work in safer sex sites.

After 30 years of law enforcement in Vancouver, B.C., where I specialized in prostitution and solicitation enforcement for a lifetime and met tens of thousands of sex trade workers, I have yet to hear one of those women come forward and tell me that she was looking forward to a career in prostitution. The fact is that some sex trade workers will challenge this fact because they're so caught up in the trade. However, once safely exited from the trade, they all say the same thing—and I can relay names and faces by the hundreds to you of those who have said the same thing to me: my God, thank you for getting me out of the sex trade industry.

Thank you.

• (1825)

**The Chair:** Ms. Williams-Jones.

**Mrs. Catherine Williams-Jones (Founder and Executive Director, New Opportunities for Women Canada Society):** On protection of sex workers from exploitation, exploitation is defined as “the unfair treatment or use of somebody or something, usually for personal gain”, in the *Encarta World English Dictionary*. It is easy to say that sex trade workers are currently exploited by men routinely. Sex trade workers working in legal brothels or on street corners legally will continue to be exploited by men as well as the state. The fact that women are exploited in the sex trade industry will not be altered simply by legalizing the activity. Perhaps there will be a reduction of associated violence associated with sex trade work. However, there is no expectancy of real protection from exploitation, since men continue to exploit our youngsters and women wherever there is prostitution. In reality, prostitution should be understood as a form of violence against women and children, not as a normalized activity.

Safety and health of sex trade workers.... In Germany, 59% of sex trade worker respondents stated that they did not feel any safer from rape or assault with the legalization of prostitution. Where legalized brothels exist, it has not protected women or provided for successful exit strategies. In fact, it shows increased institutional pimping by the state and has made it more difficult for prostitutes to keep what they earn. In New Zealand, the laws protect the pimps and the interest of the johns, rather than workers in the sex trade industry. Legalizing prostitution will only increase the need for women from other nations to fill the vacancies in the prostitution industry.

Dutch women involved in prostitution state that legalization is just a way to tax their earnings. They do not feel that their health or safety has improved as a result of legalization. Although benefits are available to registered workers, they choose not to avail themselves of them, since the stigma will follow them for the rest of their lives.

Illegal aliens in prostitution.... Recently, Canadians were shocked to hear that Romanian and other eastern European women were immigrating to Canada to fill a perceived need for prostitutes in our country. Apparently, Canadian women do not wish to become prostitutes in sufficient numbers to fill the need, and other women were immigrating to slake the desire for sexual services of our Canadian men. In the Netherlands, where prostitution is legalized, very few Dutch women are working in the sex trade. Instead, women are being imported from 32 different countries, primarily from central and eastern Europe.

Reduction of social stigma.... Would the average Canadian mother feel any differently about her son bringing home a legal prostitute for dinner, as opposed to an illegal prostitute? Will legalizing prostitution reduce the inherent shame and disgrace people feel about prostitution, or is that disgrace too close to Canada's traditional cultural-societal roots? The practitioners will continue to feel the social stigma, notwithstanding legalization. Canadian culture will not embrace the sanctification of young women selling their bodies to feed the appetite of grown men.

Prostitution: indoors versus outdoors.... There is a common misbelief in developed nations that the prostitution industry should be moved from outdoors to indoors to improve the safety of its workers. A review of other nations' success, or lack of it, by following this theory provides interesting data regarding the safety of prostitutes working indoors. In the Netherlands, where prostitution is

legal, 60% of prostitutes have been physically assaulted, 70% have been verbally threatened with physical assault, 40% exposed to sexual violence, and 40% have been forced into prostitution by an acquaintance. It has also been found that prostitutes experience great emotional distress when engaging in indoor legal prostitution. It is clear that legalizing prostitution and moving it indoors effectively removes an eyesore for the community, but has little benefit for the exploited children and women who are caught up in the trade.

Prevention strategies: adoption and education.... Federal and provincial guidelines for adopted children are required. The foster care system has an extremely high rate of abuse incidents. Keeping the children in staffed resources and adopted families are much more healthy options. Long-term support for the families and the adopted child is required. Childhood survivors can become abusive personalities and extra education is required. Cause-and-effect education surrounding childhood sexual abuse in our school system should be a requirement.

Education for pedophiles.... Education and resources need to be widely available to anyone who is interested, notwithstanding their status, with no-strings-attached policies in place. There is a real need for provision of education for youngsters as early as eight years old within the school system and ongoing into high school. This would include a care team approach that would have social service agencies, education professionals, law enforcement, NGOs, and businesses partnering. It would provide a holistic approach to seeing that our children understand at an early age the pitfalls of prostitution and sexual abuse. This program might include sensitivity training for law enforcement agencies and ensure treatment on demand. This style of program is currently under way in the Vancouver area.

•(1830)

Provincial and federal funding for legalized brothels should be redirected to the national education and treatment-based programs. To be effective, the government would need to partner with specific partners currently at work in communities across Canada.

These are just a few examples of how Canada can manage the current solicitation and prostitution problems that plague our nation. Legalizing prostitution will not remove significant dangers or provide adequate safety, encouragement, rehabilitation, treatment, and exit strategies for the children and women caught up in the sex trade industry. There will always be predators who will prey on our lost souls, such as the accused serial killer Willy Pickton. The legalization of these laws will not and cannot ever protect Canadian children and women who find themselves caught in the violent and self-destructive lifestyle of prostitution. There will always be predators who will take advantage of our youth. What is required is funding to be directed into treatment, education, rehabilitation, and exiting strategies and programs.

In conclusion, as a former Vancouver street kid myself who never had to stumble to some of the lengths we have talked about today, I plead with you to remember that these women and children are victims, and they are crying out for our help, not for a death sentence.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Williams-Jones.

Mr. Hanger, for seven minutes.

**Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank both of you for coming and passing on your experiences to this committee. As you know, the committee will be making a series of recommendations regarding the solicitation laws. The rest of the laws are all centred around prostitution, which I think our mandate has sort of expanded to include in that case.

I'm interested, Catherine, in your reference to this national education program. You talk about education for children eight years old and up, and you talk about education—and probably some rehabilitation aspects—for pedophiles. I know where you're going with this particular issue because it's often their having been preyed upon by pedophiles that leads to further breakdown in the lives of the young girls who end up as prostitutes—I assume that's what your reference is here.

I'm curious about what you see the federal government doing to strengthen its commitment to children by developing a program like this. Are there programs in our schools dealing with the prostitution issue in children, and what do you see happening with the education and rehabilitation of pedophiles?

**Mrs. Catherine Williams-Jones:** I think, from my perspective, we are not doing a good job of educating our children and ensuring that our children are aware of the pitfalls of prostitution, of what it's like to be recruited. We're aware of kids in B.C. as young as nine being recruited.

I think that there's a need to put a program in place to provide opportunities for kids to become aware and to have people with whom they have built relationships so that should they find themselves in a difficult situation—historical or childhood sexual abuse—that relationship exists where they can disclose and receive support and recognize that they are not the only one in that situation.

From our perspective, we do have a program that we bring into schools; however, we are limited in terms of how much we can do it, because we end up having to have a whole care team in place. I won't do a presentation in a school without my clinical care team because, with an average of 30 kids in a class, we have three disclosures of sexual abuse per presentation—three disclosures of sexual abuse per an average of 30 students in a classroom.

•(1835)

**Mr. Art Hanger:** Ten percent.

**Mrs. Catherine Williams-Jones:** In the case of pedophile education, I think we're doing a bit of a better job in educating johns in Vancouver, for instance, with the offender program through the John Howard Society, but I think the more we educate around the causes and effects of childhood sexual abuse, of childhood sexual exploitation, the better the inroads we will make in terms of reducing the number of individuals who are prepared to prey upon women and children.

**Mr. Art Hanger:** Now going back to the national education program, I'd like to get a feel for what kind of presentation you would suggest the national government get involved in here. I have my concerns about that and I'm wondering how you would envision it taking place.

**Mrs. Catherine Williams-Jones:** I think it would involve funding for the provinces to put together programs that can remain fluid enough to address emerging needs and provide opportunities for kids to understand the pitfalls of the sex trade and drug addiction.

I think every community, and likely every province, will have different emerging issues. For instance, in our province, one of the biggest issues we're dealing with right now is crystal meth, and crystal meth within the sex trade.

**Mr. Art Hanger:** So drugs like crystal meth are pushing this increase in prostitution then?

**Mrs. Catherine Williams-Jones:** I would definitely say they go hand in hand.

**Mr. Doug Lang:** If I may comment with regard to your question, sir, I don't necessarily see a national program, but maybe matched funding, or that type of initiative.

**Mr. Art Hanger:** National funding for the provinces to deliver?

**Mr. Doug Lang:** Matched national funding, yes, or some component or something similar to that, so the provinces, who have jurisdiction over education programs, can put together suitable programs. As Catherine said, each province might be quite different.

One such program that could be effective might look like this, sir. We should have a police agency involved, and the education system and professional teachers from the schools, and social workers from the community, and experts in drug rehabilitation. Such a program was just initiated on a trial basis at several schools on the east side of Vancouver, when I was managing our vice unit dealing with prostitution and solicitation. There were going to be professional actors involved, who were volunteering their time to act out scenarios for the children in their classes, starting at eight years, done with the permission of parents, who were sent a returnable letter by the school. So there was buy-in from the community or families. This program was going to provide quite a holistic approach to the problem of prostitution and solicitation in that particular neighbourhood; it was going to be very balanced, with each component bringing in certain expertise and experience.

That type of programming could possibly work wonders right across our country.

• (1840)

**Mr. Art Hanger:** Okay. That's one side, of course; that's one proactive approach. In the meantime, you have a real dilemma on your hands, given the extent to which this activity is being played out right across the country in every major centre.

There have been presentations here in favour of some form of decriminalization or legalization of the activities, even around prostitution. Some have suggested going as far as removing bawdy house laws, procurement, found-in, transport, and those types of things, and then decriminalizing the women who are being exploited, if you will. How do you see that fitting into the framework in this country?

**Mr. Doug Lang:** It's a good question and a difficult one. De facto, at this stage, across certainly parts of the west and I believe parts of the rest of Canada police agencies are not pursuing the arrest of women who are caught up in the sex trade industry. It's not codified, of course, under the Criminal Code—it still remains a law—however, police agencies are looking at a much broader perspective, if you will. Nowadays there's much less impact from and interest in the arrest of sex trade workers; it's redirected towards safe exiting strategies for them. The statistics bear that out across the nation, primarily.

I would think whether or not we amended the Criminal Code to reflect this would be quite irrelevant at this stage, because communities are already placing pressure on enforcement agencies to review their policies on how they enforce the laws of the land in this particular area; this is typical of communities and law enforcement across the country. That may need review and may need some changes. I wouldn't say no to it; however, to legalize prostitution is to encourage our youth to take on that work—because

I can't call it a profession—at an early age. I'm not saying underage, but at an early age.

Take a look at the average 18-year-old kid who has a grade twelve education or maybe less—more like a grade nine or grade eight education. That girl can make either \$8 an hour at McDonald's, or whatever she can make in prostitution. Kids that age don't look for their entire future; they look for where they can buy the next tube of lipstick. And that's true, sir; that's exactly what they're thinking. We've had kids come in off the street and go through rehabilitation programs and two months later slip back on the street for one night because they needed to buy makeup.

One of the problems is that when kids get involved in prostitution, emotionally speaking they remain at that age until they exit from prostitution. I personally, just recently, met a young woman—I'll leave her name as Jean—who is 44 years old, with the emotional ability and outlook of a 12-year-old. She came into prostitution at 12 and she exits the profession, if you will—the trade—with the emotional standard of a 12-year-old. It's debilitating. That's not what we want for our youth; it's not what my community wants for its youth. And that's one of the reasons we're here today.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Madame Brunelle.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Hello, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for coming.

I tried to determine what your organization does. If I understand correctly, you intercede with young female prostitutes. I think that you intercede with prostitutes under 18 years of age. Is that right?

Since juvenile prostitution is illegal, as is procuring, how would you like us to respond? As you know, the committee is mandated to try to see how the safety of sex workers and the community can be improved and how exploitation and violence can be reduced.

We usually tend to look more at adult prostitution. We wonder, for example, in what ways prostitution could be decriminalized to improve safety. We are always talking about consenting adults. Are child and juvenile prostitutes in more danger as a result of prostitution?

In addition, am I right in thinking that the laws exist but are not enforced, and that is why these young women and young men involved in prostitution are in more danger than the others?

• (1845)

[English]

**Mrs. Catherine Williams-Jones:** I would have to say that first off, our organization deals with the sexually exploited. We consider them youth. Under the federal government guidelines, we work with women up to the age of 29, and on occasion over the age of 29. As a founder of the organization, I can say that limiting ourselves at the 29-year-old level was quite intentional because we have found in our experience that sex trade workers who are into their thirties and forties are so heavily drug-addicted and so heavily linked to and entrenched in this lifestyle that their opportunity for getting out and recovering well is extremely limited.

I do not consider an 18-year-old to be any more at risk in the sex trade than I do a 24-year-old. I consider them both to be at extreme risk. Research has shown that legalization has not made it safer for the 18-year-old or the 24-year-old or the 44-year-old. I think that anyone involved in the sex trade, involved in sexually exploiting themselves.... I personally have met over 2,600 women and children who have been involved in the sex trade, and I have yet to meet one who says "I wanted to stay. I want to go back."

[Translation]

**Ms. Paule Brunelle:** It is clear that we are not talking about legalization. In my view, in any case, that is not at all the solution.

However, a number of prostitutes have told us that the solicitation laws put them in danger. Why? Because the laws force them to make decisions too quickly when they are solicited and encourage them to avoid the police and go to areas that are darker and darker, where there are not many people, and so forth. That is where prostitutes get killed and there is a lot of violence.

We are certainly not talking about legalizing prostitution. That is not what we mean. However, this soliciting legislation has proved to be ineffective. So we are looking for solutions, and that is more or less where my question is heading. Do you, for your part, think that legalization is a solution that could be considered? Under these conditions, are prostitutes more victims than women who should be tried and imprisoned? If they are tried and imprisoned, their lives are practically over.

[English]

**Mrs. Catherine Williams-Jones:** I believe that we have already begun to move in that direction. I know that within our organization we have very close working relationships with enforcement around our province. We have a team that is brought in annually to do sensitivity training with enforcement agencies, to educate them on the issues. I think those are definitely positive steps. We have built a relationship such that a sex trade worker can actually sign off on an agreement for the officer to contact us, and we can come in and put

supports in place if she is willing to exit. I think those are all great steps, and I'm quite relieved to hear you say that you don't think we're moving towards legalization because these steps are already being taken without legalization.

I'm going to defer to Doug for the solicitation law piece.

• (1850)

**Mr. Doug Lang:** Thank you.

What seems to be working well with law enforcement agencies, the ones that are successful in this, is policy for police officers on how they will enforce various sections of the Criminal Code, particularly subsection 213(1), street solicitation. They treat it as a bit of a nuisance, if you will, the fact that there are people working on the street corner and the community is upset with that. Police officers across the land—I can certainly speak for Vancouver—are more and more focusing on dealing with the women as victims; there's no question of that. It's primarily women, but there are some young men caught up in prostitution also.

The number of arrests for women in a year in Vancouver over the last decade has dropped, oh, a thousand per cent. I could give you fresh figures if you needed them. The reality behind this, though, is that police officers—and I'll speak for Vancouver, where my experience is—are making occasional arrests of street trade workers for the following reasons.

One is they will not leave a particular community. They're refusing to change locations and the community, then, is coming out in cars, taking their pictures, and standing nose to nose with johns. Violence erupts over that, so the police intervene as peacekeepers, of course, as you would expect.

The other reason there are arrests made often doesn't involve that. It is to try to establish a relationship between the worker and the investigator, who almost invariably is a highly experienced detective who specializes in this area, not a uniformed constable. The investigator will create a situation where the young woman is arrestable, but there is no intention of putting her before a judge, because the judges, certainly in the Lower Mainland, will not sentence her to anything. There's no reason to do that other than to create the opportunity for a relationship. It's that opportunity that allows young women to be safely removed from the street to go to other resources, whether it be NOW Canada or other resources in the community.

For the most part, the young women who are working there are frightened. They're frightened of the johns, they're frightened of the pimps, and they're frightened of the police, and it's that relationship building, which starts at a very low level, that is important. It's the one tool the police do have. If they're using it wisely—and I'm sure it's not the same across the land but I can say on the west coast it is and throughout the Lower Mainland it is the focus of police action—if there's going to be an arrest, it's to create relationship.



That woman is not put through the court system. There's no value in it for the police; it's a waste of time, but it is a lever for that purpose.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Paule Brunelle:** Are you telling us that ....

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We have to move on. We'll come back.

Ms. Davies.

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Thank you very much.

First, thank you to both of you for coming to Ottawa. And I'm sure the weather is wonderful in Vancouver.

I want to reiterate Madam Brunelle's point, because generally speaking, I don't think we've really had any witnesses who have actually suggested—maybe there was one—any sort of regime of legalization.

There's been a lot of discussion about what we call “decriminalization”, which is seen as something different. Maybe that's not different in your mind, and you can tell us that, but I just wanted to point that out, that no one has really been advocating legalization in terms of sort of a state-sanctioned.... Well, I mean, one can argue that we already have some form of legalization in the form of escort agencies. There are a lot of contradictions in the law, of course.

Catherine, at the end of your initial presentation you said that these women are crying out for our help, not a death sentence. That's a sort of heavy way of looking at things, and I think we have to listen to that. My feeling, though, is that the criminalization of these women, even the threat of law enforcement and the use of enforcement as a primary tool, in effect as well becomes some form of death sentence. I would actually point to the communicating law. It creates a very dangerous situation where basically even the threat of enforcement is causing women to get into cars, make a decision often in a few split seconds, and be driven away to who knows where.

I base that statement on talking to many, many sex workers, particularly in Vancouver. Some of them are drug users; some of them are not. Even if they are, these are people who can speak for themselves and who are very articulate about what they say and what their experience is.

So I just wanted to bring that element in, that this is about minimizing risk and harm. But the question is whether it's appropriate to rely on law enforcement and criminalization as a way of dealing with what is a very complex issue. I think it's too easy, sort of black and white, to say we just have to enforce the law better, or something like that, because I think there are arguments to be made that the laws themselves can be very harmful.

Secondly, in terms of the role of the police, I think again there are some contradictions, in that your enforcer is also your helper, and we've heard that very often from women—this idea that the police are there to help you, when in actual fact their job is to enforce the law, and that's how they're perceived. We've heard from many sex workers that the last people they're going to go to when they're

actually in trouble are the police. In fact, they won't report, because they fear basically being penalized themselves. We've heard that repeatedly across the country. So it is a complex relationship.

And we are distinguishing here between adults and children—I'll come back to sexually exploited youth in a moment. But in terms of adults, if our goal is to minimize harm and risk, do you want to see less law enforcement, do you want to see more law enforcement? How do you see that? What's the role there? Do you think it's successful in terms of what's currently taking place with enforcement?

• (1855)

**Mrs. Catherine Williams-Jones:** I agree with you. It's a very, very complex issue, and I think we are already making strides in this arena in terms of establishing teams, if you will, like we have in Vancouver. I know I have been welcome, my staff have been welcome, and other organizations that work with sex trade workers have been welcome to partner with VPD, to partner with the RCMP, to go out and begin to build these relationships and to offer opportunities for these young women to exit.

In our program I'm not experiencing young women who are deathly afraid of enforcement, from either Vancouver or the community in which we work. Yes, that has been traditionally the relationship, but we are making strides in changing that.

**Mr. Doug Lang:** Let me add, at VPD when I was managing the vice unit, in one year we increased our productivity by almost 800%.

**Ms. Libby Davies:** What do you mean by “productivity”?

**Mr. Doug Lang:** We changed the focus of the unit's enforcement model into a model of rehabilitation and exiting strategies. When I brought that model to the organization, Jamie Graham, the chief, supported it 100%, and I implemented it. We improved our statistics, if you will—our ability to deliver service—by about 800%.

That was with about a 50%, or maybe a little bit more, increase in the arrests of women who were working on the street. They were not processed through the criminal system, but they were detained by the police. That's where the initial relationship-building started.

The role of the police.... It is difficult to look at it as being an enforcer and a helper—and I understand that—from some people's perspective. From a peace officer's perspective, that is the primary function of Canadian policing. We are not law enforcement officers, as the Americans are; we are peacekeepers. I speak as one, though I am retired from the force, but allow me that.

Canadian police officers have a different philosophy from Americans or European police. That philosophy is based in English common law, and it's based on helping people, not hindering them. Taking that philosophy another step in dealing with street trade workers and prostitution, there is a will—I'll speak for Vancouver—to assist these people off the streets, and there is a reward for those detectives who do it. There is a system in place for it.

Let me give you an example of why the police need some ability to connect officially with a street trade worker. One year, when I was a detective in the vice section many years ago, I arrested and charged—with successful charges and jail time for pimps—one a week. One pimp a week went to jail, and they stayed in jail. They got four- and five-year sentences. The only way I could get to those pimps was through an informant. The informants were always, in my experience, young women.

Those young women trusted me. First, I wouldn't charge them with a criminal offence; second, I would protect them; and third, I would relocate them. Then the relationship changed: fourth, I ensured that they found their family, or a family that could help them; fifth, I got them into Simon Fraser University, personally walking them to the admissions department; sixth, stood up for them at their weddings; and seventh, now am celebrating the birth of their children.

That is the relationship of a police officer, and that's the proper relationship of a peacekeeper in this nation of ours. It is not one of enforcement. The enforcement model is 20% of a police officer's time in Canada. The other 80% of the time is dedicated and directed to working with people, finding them resources, and helping them with their problems. That is right across our nation; that is the ratio of help versus law enforcement. It's an old number that has been around for years.

So we as police see ourselves differently from perhaps some of our community, who perhaps see us within an enforcement model—ticket-writing, and catching the bank robber. That's not what we do.

• (1900)

**The Chair:** You'll have three minutes, Mr. Hanger.

**Mr. Art Hanger:** Thank you.

I think that was a very good description of your role as a police officer, Mr. Lang. Do I call you Mr. Lang? Because you are no longer on the police department, is that it?

**Mr. Doug Lang:** That's correct.

**Mr. Art Hanger:** The committee has had the good fortune to listen to one adviser to the Swedish government. She was actually a Canadian citizen—formerly a Swedish citizen, and then a Canadian citizen, and now she's back in Sweden—advising the government on this whole issue of prostitution.

Through that process, they have come up with what I would consider a functional model. It's an exit strategy for those who are involved in prostitution. It's an education strategy that deals with the youngsters at a fairly young age, from what I can tell. It's also an enforcement strategy, where they crack down heavily on the pimps, procurers, the johns, and—where it all fits into the scheme of things—drug pushers. Sometimes they are one and the same.

What do you think of that model?

**Mr. Doug Lang:** I think so much of this model that I drove the model in my organization to the chief's office, and the entire organization is dedicated to following that model. It is the only way to go for policing in Canada. It's so simple. It is so very simple, and it is going to work. It is working right in Vancouver and in other cities across Canada. Exit strategies for these young women caught up in this lifestyle are absolutely critical. Without this and the resources to follow that exit, this nation is going to be mired in the problems it has now for as long as it takes us to clue in and find the resources and find the experts. They are out there. They're wanting to help.

I'll do it for nothing.

• (1905)

**Mr. Art Hanger:** You're hired.

I go back to that presentation by Ms. Ekberg, who is still working with the Swedish government. They are looking even for further initiatives to deal with this problem, but they have the bulk of the problem licked already, from what her presentation states. The issue of lack of safety, even if you look at that alone, has diminished because the number of prostitutes in the country has diminished and the strategy to educate is obviously having its effect as well. That is the key thing here. At least it's proactive.

It was done on a national level. What you talk of is maybe done on a local level, and what you're doing is applying it within the framework that you have within the laws as they sit. The interesting thing with the Swedish model is they do not distinguish street, escort, massage, strip joints. They include them all. Prostitution is bad—it exploits women—and their basic premise is prohibition.

**The Chair:** Your time is up.

**Mr. Art Hanger:** I would ask what you think of that when it comes to the broad sweep of their law as it may apply to this particular activity.

**Mr. Doug Lang:** I try not to adopt a typical police persona when dealing with questions like this. However, the first word that came to mind when you suggested the Swedish model was “amen”. This is the type of leadership that's required with this particular issue.

What's happening in the streets of Vancouver, as with other cities across Canada, is not pleasant. I don't think for a moment that these people who are caught up in this are happy.

We need a national strategy that law enforcement agencies can work within provincial jurisdiction working together, so that the national government is outlining the broad goals, the broad focus, and the provincial governments, working through the municipalities, would be implementing that as it applied to this particular municipality to meet those goals.

**The Chair:** Madam Brunelle.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Paule Brunelle:** The more we talk about this problem, the clearer it becomes that there is not just one kind of prostitution, just as there is certainly not just one way of dealing with it.

If I understand you properly, Mr. Lang, you are telling us that the solicitation legislation allows you to contact prostitutes and try to help them. Suppression is only 20 p. 100 of police work. You do it therefore in a very humane way, by emphasizing education more. This approach is certainly interesting, but it is unfortunately not emphasized by most police forces. Prostitutes have often told us that they hesitate to complain to the police. When they complain about violence, the police often tell them that those are the risks of the trade. The more I look into this, the more I tell myself that we will have to have several different approaches.

We have met prostitutes who worked mostly as escorts and who were very happy to do so. They do that for a period of their lives and seem to be just fine with it. On the other hand, there are street prostitutes who have drug problems, health problems, and many other problems. That is something else. The situation is even more complex as a result of the fact that people think very differently from one part of the country to another.

I found what you had to say very interesting when you spoke about decentralizing the financing and said that we should give the financing to the provinces and leave it up to them to solve these problems. I totally agree with you on this point. The provinces are closer to the people and better able to see how the problem can be solved in each place on the basis of how advanced the thinking is.

That is what I had to say. I hope I understood what you meant. What would be the most important recommendation that you could make to this committee in order to deal with the problem of violence against women in the context of prostitution?

• (1910)

[*English*]

**Mrs. Catherine Williams-Jones:** Prevention.

Can I make a couple of additional comments?

**The Chair:** Sure.

**Mrs. Catherine Williams-Jones:** I think that anything short of a multi-pronged approach will fail. And the role I see for the feds would be one of pressuring the provinces to begin to address these issues and holding their feet to the fire. I agree with you that they are the ones who have the understanding of what is occurring in their communities.

Regarding the comment about the Swedish model with respect to escort agencies and street-level and in-house all being considered the sex trade, anything less than that is assisting the sex trade in creating a class system in which they will be further victimized the further down the food chain they go.

In terms of the discussion about escort workers, in my experience, most often escort workers digress to the place where they become street level once they are, if you will, used up. At that point in time, they become the desperate individuals we are speaking about and who my agency serves.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Madam Davies.

**Ms. Libby Davies:** Just as a matter of interest, how many women did you provide assistance to in Vancouver, say last year?

**Mrs. Catherine Williams-Jones:** Good timing. I just completed my executive summary for my AGM.

In the last fiscal year, Now Canada worked with 842 women and children.

**Ms. Libby Davies:** Is that separate people?

**Mrs. Catherine Williams-Jones:** That's correct.

**Ms. Libby Davies:** Okay. We talk a lot about street prostitution. That's where a lot of the public debate has been. But I think most experts agree that actually street prostitution amounts to something like 10% or 15% of prostitution overall, so we have very little discourse about the other potential 85%.

From a policing point of view, I'm just curious, based on the arguments you've made today, why it is that we don't have crackdowns and enforcement there. We've heard from escort workers, actually in Vancouver, and they're bothered very little by the police. If this is about striking this relationship and helping people get out, even though it begins with some sort of enforcement connection, why do you think so many of the resources are directed towards street prostitution and not towards escorts or massage parlours or body-rub parlours and so on?

**Mr. Doug Lang:** That's a great question.

There are a number of reasons for that. One is the difficulty for police undercover operatives to gather evidence in a massage parlour situation. To satisfy the courts, one has to present hard evidence, and that evidence generally means some sort of sexual activity that has gone on between an escort or a prostitute, a masseuse, and the evidence gatherer. The law in Canada on agent work—that is, a hired person the police use or a person who volunteers to assist the police—has been gradually whittled away by law made by the courts to the point that working with an agent has become very difficult for police. Police officers are certainly not going to be going into massage parlours and availing themselves of sexual services on my watch. That's not what you expect of your police officers. They don't want to do it. They don't want to be there.

Some of the other issues, aside from evidence gathering, are simply the resources. Police departments across this land are short of resources, desperately short. There are ten detectives in the city of Vancouver who specialize in prostitution. Prostitution is one of the greatest concerns of residents of Vancouver. It falls not too far behind auto theft, and theft from auto, believe it or not, and break and entry. Ten detectives to handle that in a city the size of Vancouver—I could multiply that by a hundred and still not tackle prostitution.

The difficulty with working indoors, if you will, is also that there is less concern by the community when sexual services transpire indoors—out of sight, out of mind. It seems to be the community will. It fits the policing model because we don't have enough police officers and resources to fight that crime effectively. I hate to say this, but it's an easy way out. There's not a lot of clamour from the community because we know there's a massage parlour that is basically a brothel. Those are the primary reasons—demand by the community, resources, and the gathering of evidence—that it has become extremely difficult to make successful prosecutions.

●(1915)

**Ms. Libby Davies:** Can I have a short follow-up?

**The Chair:** Go ahead.

**Ms. Libby Davies:** I think that's a very interesting answer, and it strikes me that the communicating law is very important to you, because that's all you've got. You're basically saying that you can't do your job, whatever that's meant to be, because it's too hard. It's too hard to get the evidence. So the communicating law becomes the vehicle by which everything else takes place. There's a big issue of discussion around that, because then really what are we trying to do here? Is this issue being driven by public complaints? Is that what drives this? Or is it based on the police or legislatures believing that prostitution is wrong? This is where I think we really have to examine what the objective actually is here, because it seems to me that the communicating law is harmful, and yet it's really the only thing you've got from your point of view. So then what the heck are we doing here? If we're going after prostitution then we're saying 85% of it doesn't count.

**Mr. Doug Lang:** Your comments are right on the money. I agree with you. The reality is—

**Ms. Libby Davies:** What is the objective, from your point of view?

**Mr. Doug Lang:** From my point of view?

**Ms. Libby Davies:** Yes. With the status quo as it is now, what the heck do you think we are trying to accomplish?

**Mr. Doug Lang:** I firmly believe that it doesn't have a lot to do with the community making noise about a crime they don't see. They don't see bank robbers either, and they don't complain about them, but we continue to arrest them. They don't see terrorists unless it's on the front page of the paper, but we continue to investigate them and arrest them when we can. The reality is there is a fibre in this nation. Canada is a great country; it's respected across the world. It really is. I've travelled the world, and Canada is respected as a fair country. Part of our fibre and our culture and our historical roots line up very closely with what we will consider acceptable in our country, in our communities, in our cities.

From the feedback I'm getting from the community, there's not a will to accept open prostitution or legalized prostitution. I appreciate that we're not talking about legalizing it, and I thank you for clarifying that. I'm not speaking of a fanatical religious right; I'm just speaking of the average community member. The feedback I got from speaking to tens of thousands of community members at various levels in communities was, "Can you put a stop to this, Doug? How can we do it? Do we need to lobby the city, the provincial government, or the federal government?"

So I see it as the will of the people, albeit a quiet one. There is a strong will of the people on a level that concerns much more than a girl standing on the street corner disturbing the traffic flow.

●(1920)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Lang.

Mr. Hanger.

**Mr. Art Hanger:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The other day we had a discussion, after a witness had made a presentation at a meeting, on the "greater good". Just what is the greater good that we should be trying to achieve? I don't think there was one person at the table who didn't think that the greater good should be to do whatever we can as legislators—I'm confining it to this committee—to make sure these young gals don't get into prostitution, and that those who are there be provided a way out, and those who exploit them feel the force of the law against them. In a nutshell, to me, that's the greater good.

If you can extrapolate on that and bring it down to our purpose as legislators, then we will try to achieve that particular broad view the best way we possibly can. That, to me, involves us here first, our courts, and every other agency that goes in to assist, whether it's police, social services, or whatever. That's just an aside, but you might want to comment on that.

Prior to 1985, we had the bawdy house laws, procuring laws, soliciting laws. In 1985, one law changed. Basically, there was a new adaptation of the soliciting law, and it became a communicating law. There was a huge spike, statistically, in charges laid by police in 1985 and beyond, for several years, whereas the procurement law and the bawdy house law remained flat. They have remained flat in numbers, even to this day, when it comes to police charges in that arena. So, very odd, but there was this huge spike in 1985 on communication laws. You were obviously a police officer, probably looking after the vice unit at that time. What happened then to cause this?

**Mr. Doug Lang:** There was an encouragement in policy, not only by the police departments and law enforcement agencies, but by the federal Government of Canada in rewriting the Criminal Code of Canada to enforce the law.

There was a huge spike in the 1980s, as you said, sir. I agree with you that the enforcement on the pimping and procurement of our young women has been pretty flat over the years. There are reasons for that. I'll break it down in a moment.

With regard to the increase in arrests under section 213 of the Criminal Code, that was apparently a desirable effect, and that was cause and effect.

Over the years, on the west coast, policing has certainly changed its vision and the way it looks at street solicitation. The women who are caught up in the lifestyle of working on the streets are considered to be victims. It is reflected in the statistics out there.

That is quite a change in philosophy. It didn't come by way of the courts, or by way of the Criminal Code of Canada, or by way of the federal government. It came from men and women who decided that this did not appear to be a satisfactory way of managing this problem. It came from some city governments, community groups, and police officers.

I would suggest that we continue to work in that manner, but we also need to add some teeth to some of the other laws, such as on procurement and pimping, so that investigators are able to gather information and evidence more easily.

I would suggest that perhaps sentencing guidelines could be provided by the federal government for our judiciary upon conviction so that there was fair sentencing. When I say "fair sentencing", I mean even sentencing across our nation.

People are coming to Vancouver right now with criminal records and outstanding warrants. When they're caught, they go to jail or they go in front of a judge. They tell police officers, and they've told me hundreds of times, that we've caught them and this is good. I've asked them why they are in Vancouver. They say that they're there because they get anywhere from a third to two-thirds of the time that they'd get anywhere else.

We need to see some sentencing standards or guidelines. I'm not saying that we should necessarily have standards, but we should have guidelines for our judiciary so there is fair sentencing.

If we can add teeth to the more serious crimes, such as pimping or being a predator, the Willie Picktons of this world, who may or may not have, at least allegedly, caused the deaths of so many people, will get 25 years in our country. I don't personally believe that's much of a deterrent to stop someone from murdering again—25 years for perhaps 25 deaths.

These are allegations, and I appreciate that, but we've seen it elsewhere. I had the pleasure of arresting Clifford Olson. There was hard evidence against him that had been found in a court.

These types of predators need to be put away, period. That's the end of it. I'm not suggesting capital punishment. I don't support that, but they need to be removed from our communities. They can be treated well. I don't care if they golf all day inside a prison wall, but I don't want them in my community ever again.

It is the prerogative of this body, through Parliament, to make changes.

• (1925)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Lang.

Madam Brunelle.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Paule Brunelle:** I would like to tell you about organized crime's involvement in prostitution. When we were doing our study, some witnesses told us that organized crime was very involved in prostitution and most prostitutes were under the control of pimps, while others said the opposite. What has your experience shown?

[*English*]

**Mr. Doug Lang:** Organized crime is healthy in Canada. With regard to prostitution, I don't think organized crime is particularly significant. I don't call pimps organized crime. Organized crime to me would be something along the lines of the Hells Angels or the Mafia, where an organization strategically goes into community to create crime. Pimps don't do that. They run a stable of five, seven, ten young women. Are a great number of women pimped in the city of Vancouver? If they're on the streets, anywhere but in the downtown east side, the real poor end of the city, yes, the majority are pimped. It would make no difference to me at all if you told me that you've heard otherwise, because I hear otherwise every time I ask one elsewhere in the city. The reality is, they are. I know that, and I know the names of their pimps. When I say the name to them, they smile.

So it is a bit of a game that gets played. I'm not speaking under oath, but I feel I am. This is an honour; I'm humbled by this. I'm telling you, other than in the downtown east side, the majority are pimped. There is some relationship. There are places in Vancouver where women cannot work a street without fear of a pimp hurting them. I've put undercover women police officers out on corners where we thought there were no pimps. We had men with knives jump out of a car and chase our operative down the street, only to be caught by a number of undercover officers. But it even surprises us. Pimping is alive and well in the city of Vancouver.

**A voice:** How about Kelowna?

**Mrs. Catherine Williams-Jones:** Pimping is alive and well in the province of British Columbia and within our nation. As an organization that works front line with these young women, we find ourselves in the position of having to be a secure access building. We find ourselves in the position of having to ensure that in our classroom and day program activities we have such things as panic buttons and immediate lines to enforcement. Pimping is very healthy in our country.

•(1930)

**Ms. Libby Davies:** To come back to your number of 842, was that in Vancouver alone?

**Mrs. Catherine Williams-Jones:** Our organization is based in Kelowna, British Columbia, and we work with 36 different referring agencies from around the province. Our mandate is to provide programs for women wishing to exit.

**Ms. Libby Davies:** That's why I referred to Vancouver. So in fact the answer you gave me is not quite correct. It's a much broader area. Is that right?

**Mrs. Catherine Williams-Jones:** That is correct.

**Ms. Libby Davies:** I asked you again because when we were in Vancouver we had testimony from the Vancouver police. I was surprised to learn that on any given night they might see 150, maximum. That would be a big night on the streets. So I was trying to rationalize 150 versus 842. Anyway, you've clarified that.

I'd like to come back to Mr. Lang's point. I am very bothered by this issue of the relationship with the police. I think it has been quite disastrous in Vancouver. I don't know if you're familiar with the Pivot report. In it, there were something like 57 affidavits that described some of the experiences that have taken place. I respect what you did, why you were there, and what you tried to accomplish. But I feel that there are different issues and objectives here. When you talk about the will of the people, wanting you to take this on as a former police officer, I question what's really driving it all.

Do we not have to be honest? I don't think people want to see women harmed. That's clear. But when it comes to separating out activities between consenting adults versus nuisance, it's the nuisance that's driving the enforcement. I don't see how we get around this. I don't see this all arising out of moral concern or a desire to help the victims. Section 213, your enforcement tool, is being driven by complaints of what's seen as a nuisance on the streets. That's why we have this great divide between on-street and off-street. So are we even being honest with ourselves about what is actually taking place here?

**Mr. Doug Lang:** I'm having difficulty with the question, I'm sorry, Ms. Davies.

**Ms. Libby Davies:** I asked you a similar thing before, and you came back and said that you felt like out there there was this imperative, the will of the people to deal with this. You said that as police this was what helps you move on this. But I actually don't think that's the case. I think people are more worried about what they see as the nuisance factor.

I think people do want harm dealt with. But in terms of your specific enforcement, I think we're fooling ourselves. It's more of a philosophical question.

**Mr. Doug Lang:** It is. What you say has great value; I'm not disregarding that. I think in part that's correct. As a practitioner I have to reflect on my own experience. I walked into Vancouver General Hospital the other day to visit an ill friend in the waiting room. It's a very dark room, and I didn't recognize her when a 35-year-old woman jumped up, came over to me, shrieked my name, hugged me, and her mother and her grandmother followed.

This isn't really unusual; it happens sometimes. She was a young woman who I took off the street years ago and we worked together, my wife and I actually, with her. For me it's a passion. For the police officers who worked with me, under my command, it was an absolute passion. It didn't deal with the Criminal Code of Canada, it didn't deal with whether somebody was a squeaky wheel in the community. If there was a squeaky wheel concerned about prostitution at the street corner, I phoned up the uniform division and asked them to send a uniform car over to move that person along, ask them to go somewhere else, because the community is angry and we don't want a breach of the peace sort of thing.

The peace officers I worked with for many years in this particular field—there's a very small field of expertise—have a passion for these women and actually care for them, and it's not driven by the community.

The broader enforcement model, I would agree with you 100%, is driven by the community. I do believe though, from my experience in speaking at community groups, that there is a genuine concern from community groups who, when they had the opportunity to speak directly to the police who are involved in this area, consistently say the same thing. Yes, it's about the safety of the girls working and the women working the street, absolutely. But it goes beyond that. It goes beyond a nuisance.

I think perhaps this committee may have had the opportunity to hear some of that, or they may not have, but I can speak for 30 years of experience of which probably half of those have been dedicated expressly to this particular situation. That is the response I've been getting, and it's all I can relate.

So it is a balance; it is mixed, I agree with you.

•(1935)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Davies.

Perhaps I could direct a question to Ms. Williams-Jones. I think you indicated in your testimony, in reference to the annual report you prepared, that you dealt with 842 women and children—and that's in the last year.

**Mrs. Catherine Williams-Jones:** That's correct.

**The Chair:** You have an 86-bed facility and you have 18 different programs for sexually exploited females. Could you briefly describe your exit strategy or strategies, and could you tell us what is your success rate? Where is the bar, and how do you determine that? Do you deal with recidivists, or it's just one opportunity and they're out? And how are you funded?

**Mrs. Catherine Williams-Jones:** NOW Canada is funded 46% by federal, provincial, and municipal funding. We raise the balance privately. We have a full continuum of care for sexually exploited female youth from the day they make contact with us right through to our seven-year follow care program. It consists of support being put into place within 60 minutes from the point of contact, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

We have structures in place; we have an education program in place; we have child care in place; we have homes that are set up to, wherever possible, meet the women where they are. If they have children in tow, the children are welcomed into our program. We have trauma therapy programs that address the historical issues of why they ended up in the sex trade to begin with.

We have a very successful pilot project that we began last year, which has increased our retention rate by 33%. It's an equine therapy program, a group therapy project. We have a four-month life skills program; we have our seven-year follow care program; and we have different stages of residential living environments, so that we can assess each client's willingness to make a complete and total lifestyle change.

In the event that the client is sliding, they're not permitted to work in the sex trade. They must abstain from alcohol and drug use while in the program. We have a "three strikes, you're out" policy. The first time out is 30 days. However, any client who comes again to recognize their burning desire to change their life can appeal their time out at any time. We're very clear with each young woman who comes through our door: once you have accessed our program, your key will always fit our door. The only thing you can do to be permanently timed out of our program is to recruit for the sex trade from within.

**The Chair:** What's your success rate?

**Mrs. Catherine Williams-Jones:** Our success rate? It depends upon what you define as success. For us? We're a seven-year-old organization. We've just entered into our seventh year within our community and within our province and have contracted with an independent consultant to evaluate our programs and services.

We maintain active contact with our follow care clients for the seven-year period. However, from day one of the organization up until today, we were working on a basis of one year clean, sober, out of the sex trade, and continuing to progress towards a healthy life and situation, and we have been sitting at approximately 63%.

**The Chair:** Do you accept anybody who comes to your door?

**Mrs. Catherine Williams-Jones:** No. Our youngest we have worked with, accessing without parental involvement, is 11. You must be age 11 to 29, and you must be able to demonstrate that you have a burning desire to change your life.

• (1940)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Hanger, we have time for another round if you wish to avail yourself of it.

**Mr. Art Hanger:** I have a couple of further questions, some of them rising out of yours, Mr. Chairman.

I'm curious about what you would do with an 11-year-old, and what would be the percentage of youngsters in the age bracket of 18 and under.

**Mrs. Catherine Williams-Jones:** I don't think I can answer that question for you. I can obtain the information and get back to you. The average age of intake into our program is 18 years of age.

As for the 11-year old, we work very hard as a staff team and as an organization to recognize that each young woman, when she accesses us, is an individual and has very individualized needs. The 11-year-old was clearly a frightening situation for all of us to be in. We have a very strong working relationship with the provincial Ministry of Children and Family Development, and we have a ministry-approved home for moms and children—women exiting the sex trade with children in tow or having children returned to their care from the government as they progress through the program. What we chose to do in that situation was place the 11-year-old into that home and provide one-on-one assistance, as opposed to putting her into our classroom environment mix. We assigned a key worker to her.

As for the 18-year-olds—the average age of intake into our program, at 18—by the time they're 18, a lot of them are becoming burned out. They're becoming so addicted they can no longer function well in the trade. They are no longer a value to their pimp, and there's another 12-year-old sitting at the food court in the mall who has low self-esteem, has been historically sexually abused, and would be more than happy to have a pimp come and take her out for a couple of weeks and get her some neat clothes and isolate her from her family and recruit her into the sex trade.

We typically find that the young women who access from the ages of 13 up to 17 don't make it on the first, second, or third; it can take up to seven attempts for them to actually succeed in making it out, and multiple years of access and support.

**Mr. Art Hanger:** So this is your experience, that seldom does a young gal who comes to your door make it, even though she has a desire at that moment to exit.

**Mrs. Catherine Williams-Jones:** That is correct, and very few will make it on their first attempt.

**Mr. Art Hanger:** I have one other question about the issue of the involvement of organized crime in brothels or massage parlours and escort services. Who runs them? You know, we've had the opportunity to sit in a dinner meeting, if you will, with a lady who claimed to be a madam, along with her boyfriend or husband, though I don't really know what their relationship was. She was an escort, and others have claimed to be madams in an escort arrangement, or that is how they referred to themselves.

Who's the collector of all the funds? Because 50% of the money is taken from the girl who performs the services.

**Mr. Doug Lang:** There are a couple of answers to that. For the most part, our experience with common bawdy houses in the city of Vancouver—and in the lower mainland, because the vice squad is actually a flying squad all over the lower mainland of Vancouver—is that individual pimps and families of pimps, if you will, control several bawdy houses like a cartel. These are often houses that are rented. But there is another type of pimp, if you will, in the several nightclubs of sorts in Vancouver owned and operated vicariously—and certainly well insulated—through a number of loopholes, if you will, by organized crime or Hells Angels. These clubs are extremely difficult to do law enforcement in; they're locked and have security. As I said earlier, it's difficult to put police officers in danger without cover teams, which are almost impossible to get in to where the actual sexual activity is taking place.

So you do see some organized crime and it's almost invariably Vietnamese-based, involving the importation of young women from Asia, coming through the city of Richmond into Vancouver and throughout Canada, and western Canada particularly. You see women being brought in from various eastern European countries, who get started in the stripper business. The stripper business in Vancouver is almost exclusively run by the Hells Angels. That is an entrance, if you will, to prostitution. They're brought over and they do some stripping work at various clubs. I don't think you want to know the names of the clubs, but I could give them to you if you wish. Those clubs are owned and operated, through long tentacles, by the Angels.

So in that respect, organized crime is alive and well in prostitution. However, it's very far removed. Generally speaking, once a woman is burned out from that, she gets out onto the street, and organized crime wants no part of that, as it's considered low on the food chain

by the criminal element. So they draw back from that and just let them go; they don't even pursue them. But if one of those women tried to leave while she was contracted, if you will, by organized crime, she would be pursued with vigour and violence.

● (1945)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Hanger.

Ms. Williams-Jones, do you have any programs for males or transgendered individuals in prostitution?

**Mrs. Catherine Williams-Jones:** We have worked with transgendered individuals. We have also referred transgendered individuals to other programs; there's a very good program in Victoria that we have had the benefit of accessing. We've had to be very creative at times. For example, there was young 13-year-old boy by the name of Justin who was out there and at risk, and his father was frightened, and there were some supports that we could put in place. As an organization, we just changed his name to Justine on our paperwork and put him through the program. We like to be inventive.

Typically, we refer to a program in New Westminster known as the Last Door. They are not sex-trade-specific, but they will work with male sex trade workers, should they be drug-addicted.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I think our researcher may have a question for you.

**Ms. Julie Cool (Committee Researcher):** The mandate of this committee is to look at the laws on prostitution, so I was curious, Ms. Williams-Jones, about what you said, that one of the criteria for your program is for people to have a burning desire for change. If section 213 of the Criminal Code were removed, how do you think that would change people accessing your program or wishing to access your program? That is to say, would it have an impact on people accessing your program if section 213 were removed?

**Mrs. Catherine Williams-Jones:** I don't believe it would, because I have yet to meet a young woman involved in the sex trade who wants to remain there permanently. I believe there will still be an extreme demand for exiting opportunities, and I know that as an organization we cannot come even close to meeting the demand for women wishing to exit.

**The Chair:** I think we have now concluded our evening.

We very much appreciate your frank and informative presentations this evening, and this will certainly help us in our deliberations. We appreciate your coming all the way from the west to cold Ottawa. Thank you again.

The meeting is adjourned.









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