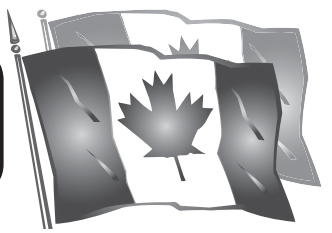




DECISION 2006



Crime and punishment in the Cariboo

ALAIN SAFFEL
Observer Reporter

One election issue getting a lot of attention is crime.

It's a problem across the country, to varying degrees. Quesnel has been especially hard hit by crime, having the third highest municipal crime rate in the province.

Drugs are one common denominator. They are often at the source of most property crime as addicts steal to feed their habit. Quesnel has seen a large number of property offences, mainly attributed to drugs.

Handgun violence has also become an issue, particularly in Toronto, after a high school girl was shot on Boxing Day.

The issue of banning handguns has come up in the campaign and has caused considerable controversy, with an urban/rural split being evident. This has also raised the issue of border security due to the fact that so many of the handguns being used by criminals in Canada are coming in from the U.S.

We asked candidates what their party's plan is to deal with crime and its root causes. Will those crime-fighting measures deal with the root causes of crime or are they going to be ineffective over the long term?

What would your government do to combat crime?

Alex Bracewell
Green party

The Green party's platform is a little softer than what my personal platform is. My personal position would be three strikes and you're in the army.

It sounds a little radical, but I think it would be a great deterrent to youthful crime. It would teach them responsibility and if you want to blame crime on lack of education, they'd

Over the final weeks of the election, we will be presenting our readers with a series of articles covering some of the major issues of the election. While all issues in the election are important, our series of articles will focus on the key issues that will affect our riding in the future.

Advance voting starts on Jan. 13 and 14, and ends Jan. 16. You should have already received your voter information card in the mail to tell you the location of the nearest polling station. Registration to vote by special ballot ends on Jan. 17 at 6 p.m. You can reach Elections Canada at 992-6810 or in the West Park Mall.

have the opportunity to get their Grade 12 education.

They would have an opportunity to learn a trade and if there was a disaster in the country, they could work as a group to help others who are less fortunate, which would give them a bit of pride in themselves, which would teach them responsibility.

This revolving-door system has created a youthful crime with zero respect to the community or anybody and themselves.



Alfred Trudeau, NDP

We have to look out there and see why this is happening. I believe it has a lot to do with the poverty situation in our riding and across the country.

When I'm a safety rep for the union at Canfor and when there's accidents, there we look at the root cause, how the accident happened and why.

When you are living in poverty, you use any way you can to find food. If you

get addicted to drugs, that's another thing as well, you head in that direction.

There needs to be stricter laws for people out there who offend more than once. You can't have somebody who's a repeat offender coming out of jail after 30 days or getting a slap on the wrist. There needs to be stiffer penalties.

Bev Collins

Canadian Action Party

We need to do a lot more about crime in respect to keeping the criminals who have been charged, found guilty and sentenced in jail to do their term.

So many of them get out on good behaviour, well before the time they should be. We're seeing a lot more dangerous criminals let out in society with no tracking capabilities to find out where they are.

In order to get rid of poverty to get rid of the displaced people who feel they have no place in society anymore, we need to give them a society they are proud of being a part of, that they can be a part of.

Simon Yu
Liberal party

We do have to look at the roots of crime. Draconian measures themselves won't solve the crime problem.

A lot of crime is socially and economically related. We have to look at the

whole picture.

We have to catch the problem in the early stages of anyone's life, through education.

Preventive measures are the most important.

With hard-core criminals, we have to have the justice system to deal with it. We can't use a simplistic approach to just throw them into jail.

We have to give young people more access to education. The key to solving a lot of problems is education. We have to make sure young people stay in school.



Chris Kempling
Christian Heritage party

The major difference between our party and all the other ones is our party is in favour of restoration of capital punishment for first-degree murderers.

Having said that, I do have some personal difficulty with that policy, partly because there are a number of examples where it has been

demonstrated someone convicted of first-degree murder has been found to be innocent.

I think if we have a policy like that, there needs to be extreme safeguards.

I wouldn't say it conflicts with Christian values. It does come into some conflict with our party's position on respect for life, from conception to natural death.

Society is entitled to protect itself from those that pose the greatest danger to it.

Dick Harris

Conservative party

I think it has to be recognized that the commitment of the federal government to the people is to maintain peace, order and good government in a country and that means safe communities.

If you have a criminal element on the streets, you have an obligation to get them off the streets. You have to provide the resources to make that happen, both at the front line police level as well as the resources to try criminals in a court of law, and if convicted, there has to be consequences where they outweigh the benefit of the crime.

If you think it's going to be fun to be a criminal in Canada, then the Conservative government is going to do what it takes to change your mind about that through arrest and penalty.

Crime is a result of some of the social problems we have, but certainly not all. Drugs are a main source of criminal activity.

A government also has a responsibility to create an environment where people can actually get jobs and earn money so they don't have to go out and commit crimes and steal it.

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