

# Exploring Criminal Justice in Prince Edward Island\*

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This supplement to *Exploring Criminal Justice in Canada* provides additional content about crime and the responses of the police, courts, and corrections that is specific to Prince Edward Island, including issues related to urban and rural crime, and the crime-related challenges that are distinctive to the province. In addition, there are examples of miscarriages of justice and issues related to managing crime and responding to victimization, including the changes in seriousness of crime between 2014 and 2018, and the potential impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on crime and the justice system. Altogether, these cases, events, and information specific to the Island enable readers to better understand the provincial context that can't be covered in a textbook that focuses on the entire nation.

## PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND: CRIME AT A GLANCE

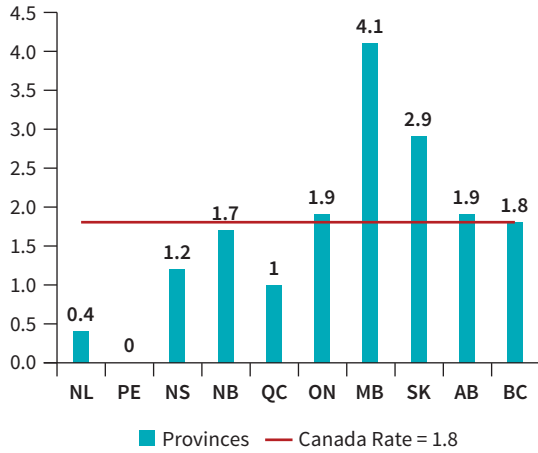
Of the 10 provinces, Prince Edward Island (PEI) is well below the national average in terms of the Crime Severity Index (CSI), which is an indicator of the volume and seriousness of crime. In 2018 the CSI for PEI was 53.7, which was the lowest in the nation—the national average was 75—and less than one-half of the CSI in Saskatchewan (139.2) (Moreau, 2019). Like the rest of Canada, rates of violent and property crime offences per 100,000 residents reported to the police in PEI are lower today than rates in the 1970s. Information from the General Social Survey (GSS), however, shows that PEI residents reported levels of violent victimization (including physical and sexual assaults and robbery) in 2014 that were higher than the average rate for the entire nation (Perreault, 2015, p. 31). We are awaiting the results of the 2019 GSS on victimization—which should be published by 2021—to see whether that trend continues.

While *Exploring Criminal Justice* described the interprovincial differences in the CSI, the following seven figures show differences in the rates

of homicide in the provinces as well as levels of crime in the largest cities in Atlantic Canada (information for Sydney in 2018 is missing) and youth crime. Figure 1 shows the homicide rate per 100,000 residents for 2018; and there were no murders in the province that year. Of the nine largest cities in Atlantic Canada, Figure 2 shows that there were no homicides at all in Charlottetown, Summerside, Cape Breton, or Corner Brook. One has to be fairly careful in reading too much into these results, especially in less populated towns and cities, as adding even one homicide offence might make places with a low population appear very dangerous.

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls initiated in 2016 has brought renewed attention to the issue of violence towards women. According to the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada (2016) more than 200 men and women are victims of family violence every day and a woman is killed by a family member every four days. With respect to family violence, risks of victimization increase for women, Indigenous women, people with disabilities, and

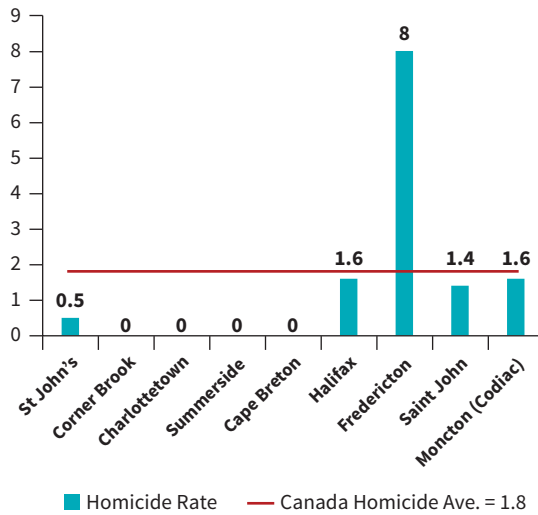
\*The ten provincial summaries follow a common template and although the examples presented in this supplement differ from the other nine, some of the content is very similar or will have identical text.



**FIGURE 1** Provincial Homicide Rates (per 100,000 residents), 2018

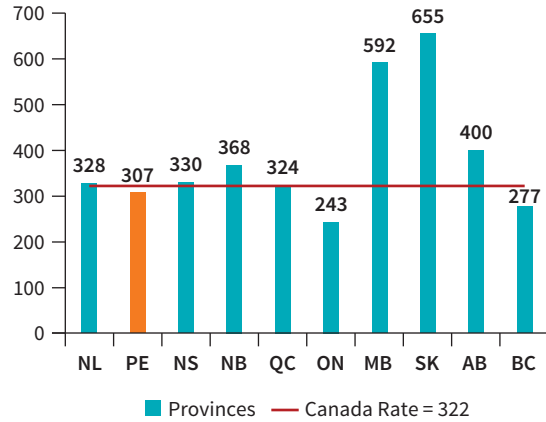
Source: Adapted from Statistics Canada (2020a) Table 35-10-0177-01

those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, or questioning (Chief Public Health Officer of Canada, 2016, p. 6). Self-report surveys such as the GSS show that most cases of family violence are never reported to the police. Burczykca (2016, p. 3) analyzed the 2014 GSS results and reported that “4 per cent of Canadians in the provinces with a current or former spouse or common-law partner reported having been physically or sexually



**FIGURE 2** Homicide Rates, Largest Cities in Atlantic Canada, 2018

Source: Adapted from Statistics Canada (2020b) Table 35-10-0178-01



**FIGURE 3** Victims of Police-Reported Intimate Partner Violence per 100,000 Residents, 2018

Source: Adapted from Burczykca (2019)

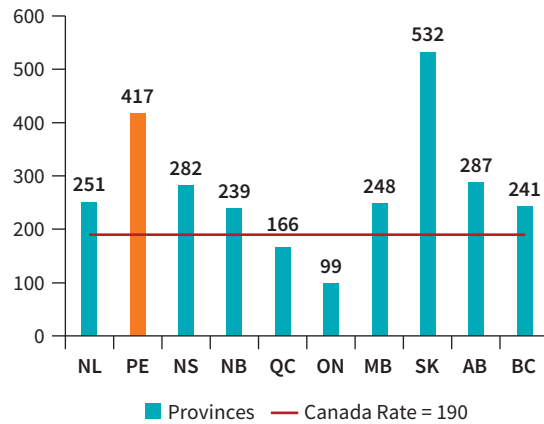
abused by their spouse during the preceding 5 years.” Figure 3 shows that acts of intimate partner violence (IPV), which are assaults committed by current or former spouses or intimate partners, are close to the national average in 2018.

The problem of family violence—which includes any violent offence directed at a family member, including intimate partners, children and one’s elderly parents—is gaining more attention due to the physical and psychological impacts of violence on all family members. The Premier’s Action Committee on Family Violence Prevention (hereafter: Premier’s Committee, 2020) reported there were 183 reports of violence to the RCMP and 162 to the Charlottetown Police Service. Of those reports, one half of the incidents reported to the RCMP resulted in criminal charges whereas only 12 per cent of the incidents reported to the Charlottetown Police Services resulted in criminal charges. This leads us to question what factors lead to those different outcomes?

As noted in *Exploring Criminal Justice*, sexual offences are among the least reported crimes. The 2014 GSS shows that only about 5 per cent of all sexual offences are actually reported to the police (see Perreault, 2015, p. 3), and only a fraction of those cases result in convictions. Moreau (2019, p. 47) reports the rate of sexual assaults reported to

the police in PEI is below the national average (71 per 100,000 PEI residents compared with 78 offences per 100,000 Canadian residents). Although crime statistics show that PEI has rates of sexual violence below the national average, we do not know the true number of these offences. Figure 4 shows the results of a Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics survey, conducted in 2018, that shows the violent victimization of women, and 2.8 per cent of PEI respondents said they had been physically or sexually victimized in the previous year, which was less than the national average of 4.3 per cent (Cotter & Savage, 2019).

Islanders can feel positive about having the lowest CSI in the nation, and between 2008 and 2018 there was a 22 per cent decrease in the overall CSI in PEI (Moreau, 2019, p. 51). From 2017 to 2018 there was a 17 per cent increase in the overall CSI and a 20 per cent increase in the violent CSI. That one year change was due to an increase in the number of break and enter crimes, sexual assaults, and theft offences. Figure 5 shows, however, the rates of impaired driving offences for the provinces, and despite having the lowest CSI, PEI has the second highest rates of impaired driving in the country. A review of this figure shows that impaired driving offences in Atlantic Canada are all higher than the national average: What factors would explain this pattern? One



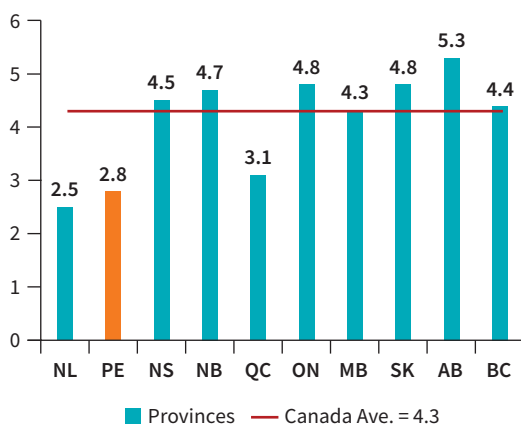
**FIGURE 5** Provincial Impaired Driving Rate (per 100,000 residents), 2018

Source: Adapted from Statistics Canada (2020a) Table 35-10-0177-01

possible explanation is the higher proportion of people living in the rural areas of these provinces. Compared with urban areas, Perreault (2019, pp. 20-1) found that rates of impaired driving in rural Canada are about two and a half times higher, impaired driving causing bodily injury offences are three times greater, and impaired driving causing death is seven times higher. There are a number of possible reasons for those results, including higher rates of vehicle ownership in rural Canada and a lack of public transportation in these places.

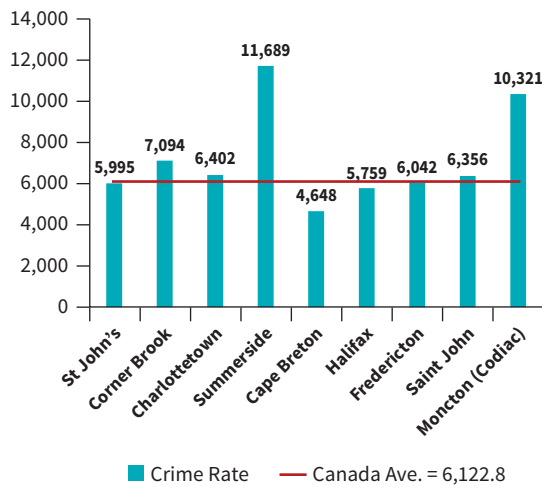
Figure 6, which presents the total crime rates for the largest cities in Atlantic Canada for 2018, indicates some variation in the amount of crime occurring in these places, although almost all these places were higher than the average of 5,363 offences per 100,000 residents for Prince Edward Island. The crime rates per 100,000 residents in Charlottetown were the third lowest in the region, while Summerside had the highest crime rate. One question that criminologists like to ask is why crime differs so much between these places. Are crime rates in Summerside really almost twice as high as Charlottetown, or are the people in Summerside more likely to report crimes to the police than Charlottetown residents?

Youth contribute to crime rates and their involvement in crime tends to be similar to adult crime rates. As a result, in places where adult



**FIGURE 4** Total Violent Victimization, Women Survey Respondents, 2018

Source: Adapted from Cotter and Savage (2019)

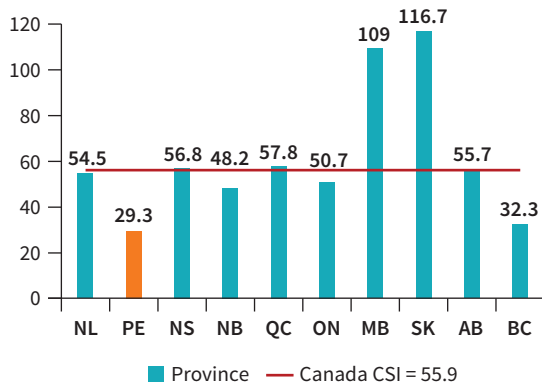


**FIGURE 6** Total Crime Rate (per 100,000 residents), Largest Cities in Atlantic Canada, 2018

Source: Adapted from Statistics Canada (2020b), Table 35-10178-01

crime is high, youth crimes tend to follow the same pattern. Moreau (2019, p. 65) reports the overall youth CSI for the provinces and Figure 7 presents that information. The overall volume and seriousness (CSI) of youth crime in PEI was about one-third the youth CSI in Manitoba or Saskatchewan.

Youth crime throughout the nation has been dropping and this has lowered the number of youth appearing before the courts, and the number of youth placed in custody has dropped dramatically in the past two decades, and this issue



**FIGURE 7** Youth Crime Severity Index by Province, 2018

Source: Adapted from Statistics Canada (2020c) Table 35-10-0026-01

is addressed in the section on Prince Edward Island’s justice system.

### Rural Crime

We tend to think of rural areas as having relatively low rates of crime and violence, but as noted in Chapter 2 of *Exploring Criminal Justice*, some rural places have higher levels of property and violent crime than any city. According to Statistics Canada (2019), about 78,500 Prince Edward Island residents (55 per cent of the population) live in the countryside, which is nearly three times the national average (19 per cent of Canada’s population lives in rural areas). Table 2.2 in *Exploring Criminal Justice* (p. 55) reports the results of research carried out by Perreault (2019) that show that both the overall and violent crime rates in PEI urban areas is greater than in rural areas. These results are inconsistent with the rest of the country, where both violent and overall crime rates in rural areas are higher. Crime trends in rural areas also differ, and Perreault (2019, p. 33) found that the CSI dropped in all four Atlantic Canada provinces between 2009 and 2017, but the drop in rural crime was 23 per cent, whereas the drop for the entire nation was 7 per cent. Like other crime statistics, however, those averages will mask the fact that some rural PEI communities will have higher levels of crime while others are more peaceful.

### Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why are rates of youth CSI (the overall volume and seriousness of crime) in Saskatchewan more than three times higher than those in Prince Edward Island?
2. What factors explain why Summerside has crime rates that are almost twice as high as Charlottetown?
3. What factors might contribute to the differences between the number of violence toward women crimes reported to the police compared to those self-reporting their victimization in Prince Edward Island?

## A STORM IS COMING: COVID-19 AND CANADA'S CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Three months into the pandemic—in mid-May 2020—the media isn't reporting significant national-level increases in the volume or seriousness of crime, but the types of crimes being committed are changing due to the number of people who are self-isolating, out-of-work, low on spending money, and suffering from stress and uncertainty. Some criminologists say that it is irresponsible to make predictions about the impact of a one-time crisis on crime as there are few prior examples and too many unknowns. We do predict, however, that the crime-related impacts of the pandemic will differ throughout the nation. Some cities and provinces may be more resistant to the ill-effects of the economic downturn while parts of the country that were already suffering—such as Alberta or Newfoundland and Labrador—may be doubly disadvantaged.

The number of people turning to alcohol and drugs, committing suicide, and engaging in crime often increases in tough economic times. Police officials are reporting that the number of residential break and enters have decreased while commercial break-ins increased, as have domestic violence incidents and street robberies (Fitzpatrick, 2020; Howell, 2020). Hate crimes directed toward East Asians are also said to have increased since the start of the pandemic.

We might not consider how some social and legal changes affect criminal activities. Wells (2020) reports that closing the borders reduced the supply of illicit drugs coming into the country and prices increased; causing some users to turn to more lethal drugs. People involved in the sex trade can no longer sell their services due to the fear of transmitting the virus. Workers in some long-term care facilities in eastern Canada allegedly abandoned their clients and some elderly people died alone in these places. Furthermore, because schools have closed, it may be harder to detect cases of child abuse because teachers are no longer reporting these crimes. Last, although there are fewer cars

on the road people are driving faster and the number of dangerous driving offences have increased in some provinces. We will not have a full accounting of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic until the 2020 police-reported crime statistics are released in the summer of 2021.

All three parts of the justice system are adapting to the pandemic, and the following briefly describes some initial impacts on the police, courts, and corrections:

**Police:** Luscombe and McClelland (2020) found that some police services have enforced social distance bylaws more aggressively than others, and many people receiving tickets for violating these bylaws are already socially marginalized. It is proving difficult for some police services to strike a balance between ensuring public safety—including the health risks for officers and the people who get stopped, searched, and/or arrested—and resisting the expansion of police powers. Anecdotal accounts suggest that some police services directed their officers to ignore low-level crimes given the risks of contracting the COVID-19 virus in the interactions between suspects and officers.

**Courts:** Most courts closed because of social distancing and virtual and/or video hearings became more commonly used. Bail hearings were prioritized, although judges were reluctant to detain accused persons in jail given the risks of contracting the virus. There was a growing backlog of cases that need to be heard sometime in the future and some predict that jury trials will not resume until 2021 (Powell, 2020). There is likely to be a backlog of family matters and civil cases that further tie up the courts given the number of lawsuits that will be launched due to broken contracts.

**Corrections:** The virus swept through correctional facilities and inmate deaths were reported throughout the country. In order to reduce the risks of spreading COVID-19, some provincial inmates in PEI were released from custody (Higgins, 2020); the other nine provinces took

a similar approach and some released between 25 and 33 per cent of their inmates. The federal and provincial prisoners who remain in custody say that tensions in these facilities have increased as the people living behind bars feel powerless to avoid the virus, and family visits—which reduce tensions—have been cut to avoid importing the virus into these facilities. As a result, family members have expressed fear that their loved ones might die behind bars without their support.

We know that the criminal justice system will weather the unpredictable future, but question the long-term impacts of the pandemic. By the time you read this summary, some of the issues we raised will have been resolved, but the long-term impact of the COVID-19 virus on the economy and jobs will shape the types of crimes that are occurring, and the operations of the police, courts, and corrections for years to come. As governments respond to manage a greater demand for services, their operating budgets maybe cut because of the economic downturns. Prior research has shown that recessions often result in less funding for the police, courts, and corrections at the same time that crime increases and the people involved in the criminal justice system have a greater set of unmet needs.

## THE 2014–18 CRIME INCREASE

One of the key themes in Chapter 2 of *Exploring Criminal Justice in Canada* was that police-reported crime was at the lowest point in decades. Moreau (2019, p. 33) says that there were 11 years of decline between 2004 and 2014, but from 2014 to 2018 the CSI increased every year for the entire nation. Most of the national-level increase was due to a greater number of cases of sexual assault (level 1), drug offences (and specifically methamphetamine, ecstasy, heroin, and opioids such as fentanyl), shoplifting and fraud. But there are also substantial differences within the provinces. As noted above there was a 22 per cent decrease in the

total CSI in Prince Edward Island between 2008 and 2018, although the violent CSI increased by 20 per cent between 2017 and 2018 (Moreau, 2019, p. 51). Even though the total CSI dropped by over one-fifth, the national average decrease was 17 per cent from 2008 to 2018. We question, however, the reasons for the 20 per cent increase in the violent CSI between 2017 and 2018, while the rest of the country only experienced a one per cent increase. Table 1 shows that each province and territory experiences some annual change and the specific violations driving the one-year changes in provincial CSI. Most criminologists would agree that we shouldn't read too much into a one-year increase or decrease in the overall crime rate as there are often yearly fluctuations. The four-year increase for the entire nation, however, is surprising and we wonder whether this trend will continue?

## Port Security: Challenges for Prince Edward Island

About 80 per cent of the worldwide trade in goods arrives by ships that dock at 4,000 marine ports. According to the World Port Source (2020) there are 239 ports in Canada, although most shipments pass through the 18 largest ports in cities such as Halifax, Montreal, and Vancouver. Charlottetown is the largest port on the Island and serves industries related to shipping, fish-handling, offshore energy production, and cruise lines. While Thibodeau (2020) reported that the number of cruise ships docking in the Charlottetown port had been increasing and that 2020 would be a record-breaking year for tourists, the impact of COVID-19 on that industry will reduce the number of those ships carrying passengers for the next few years.

Ports have always been hot spots of crime given the movement of goods and people, and the possibility of smuggling, theft, and corruption. The members of ships' crews on shore leave and visitors from cruise ships have also contributed to local crime, although most of their offences tend to be minor and related to alcohol use. Today, however, one of the foremost problems is the involvement of organized crime in marine ports. The Standing Senate Committee on National Security

**TABLE 1** Changing Crime Severity Index (CSI) in Canada, 2017-18

	<b>% Change</b>	<b>Violations Driving the Change in CSI</b>
Canada	+2	Increase in fraud, sexual assault (level 1), shoplifting and theft over \$5,000 (Decrease in B&E and robbery)
Newfoundland and Labrador	+4	Increase in weapons violations and fraud (Decrease in B&E)
Prince Edward Island	+17	Increase in B&E, sexual assault (level 1), and theft of \$5,000 or under.
Nova Scotia	-2	Decrease in homicide, child pornography, and B&E (Increase in sexual assault – level 1, and fraud)
New Brunswick	+4	Fraud (Decrease in B&E)
Quebec	-2	Decrease in B&E
Ontario	+6	Increase in fraud, B&E, homicide and sexual assault (level 1)
Manitoba	+6	Increase in robbery, fraud, shoplifting of \$5,000 and under, and B&E
Saskatchewan	-3	Decrease in administration of justice statistics and sexual violations against children (Increase in fraud and B&E)
Alberta	0	Increase in fraud (Decrease in homicide)
British Columbia	0	Increase in fraud, theft over \$5,000 and sexual assault (level 1) (Decrease in homicide)
Yukon	-7	Decrease in homicide (Increase in assault (level 2) and mischief)
Northwest Territories	+5	Increase in homicide, mischief, administration of justice violations and fraud (Decrease in cocaine related offences and sexual assault (levels 1 and 2))
Nunavut	+6	Increase in mischief, homicide, attempted murder, administration of justice violations and aggravated sexual assault (level 3) (Decrease in B&E).

Source: Adapted from Moreau (2019)

and Defence (2007) observed that “it is no secret that Canada’s ports are riddled with organized crime, and nobody seems to be doing much about it” (p. 2) and that “security forces at seaports and airports are under-staffed and ill-prepared to deal with organized crime and terrorism” (p. 18). Public Safety Canada (2018, p.1) say that organized crime groups have two uses for ports:

- Profit-oriented crimes that generate revenue such as importation of illegal drugs, counterfeit goods (e.g., tobacco and

pharmaceutical products, clothing), illegal immigrants, and cargo theft; and

- Crimes to support their profits, including corruption of industry insiders, security, and law enforcement personnel.

It is very difficult to detect illegal goods being imported into the country because of the millions of shipping containers passing through these ports, and this volume “reduces the likelihood of contraband being inspected, detected, and seized” (Public Safety Canada, 2018, p. 1).

A number of law enforcement agencies investigate ordinary crimes, such as theft occurring in the ports, as well as organized crime, fraud, and white-collar offences. The RCMP is responsible for protecting the Halifax, Montreal, Hamilton, and Vancouver ports through its National Port Enforcement Teams. In addition to those formal teams in those ports, the RCMP also partners with the Canada Border Services Agency, the Coast Guard, and regional and local police services, such as the Charlottetown Police Service, in ports throughout the nation.

Police are also concerned with organized crime groups using the smaller unguarded ports and docks along the hundreds of kilometres of shoreline surrounding the Island. Presidia Security Consulting (2011) conducted a study of crime associated with Canada's ports and found that members of organized crime groups are commonly found in ports throughout Atlantic Canada. In 2014, for instance, police arrested 40 persons ranging in age from 20 to 64 years who were involved with a drug distribution network moving illicit drugs between PEI and New Brunswick. The police investigation, called Operation Clean Sweep, was carried out over four months and involved officers from the Charlottetown, Kensington, and Summerside police services, as well as the RCMP. Although most of these cases were resolved by 2016, one of the accused persons had left the country, and was arrested when he returned. He subsequently plead guilty to his involvement in the drug trafficking and was sentenced in November 2019 (Ross, 2019).

Smaller seaports lack coordinated or high levels of enforcement, and they often rely on private security such as Commissioners. As a result, these places may be vulnerable to higher levels of crime. Presidia Security Consulting (2011, p. 22) observes that "smaller ports in New Brunswick have also been used for smuggling by the Montreal mafia and the Nova Scotia and Quebec chapters of the Hells Angels." The RCMP reports that the Hells Angels are returning to Prince Edward Island. Doucette (2016) writes that "the gang has begun

to re-assert itself, cementing its presence mainly through affiliate or so-called 'puppet clubs' in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and PEI," and cites a gang expert as saying the move into Atlantic Canada "is the gang's latest attempt to ensure they control the drug market from coast to coast." Donkin (2017) cites Professor Stephen Schneider, from St. Mary's University in Halifax, as saying that "The Maritimes are attractive to the Hells Angels because its marine ports can form a crucial link in a national drug pipeline."

One way that police services in PEI can respond to criminal organizations such as the Hells Angels is to seize the property of these people if it has been involved in a crime or was obtained through criminal activities, such as a vehicle that was purchased with money from drug sales. Although well-established in the rest of the country, PEI and Newfoundland and Labrador are the only two provinces that do not have civil forfeiture laws. Stewart (2020) observes that there is growing support for introducing forfeiture laws on the Island.

In order to reduce the influence of persons involved with organized crime in the nation's transportation industries "all 193,000 workers with access to restricted areas at Canada's sensitive airports and seaports are being quietly run through a police database each and every day—a new system called 'perpetual vetting'—in a push to extinguish 'the inside threat' of criminal infiltration" (Humphreys, 2016). In addition, there are additional enhanced background screenings for employees working in restricted zones in ports (Boland, 2020). Despite those efforts, the smuggling of persons and illegal goods into the country will continue given the potential profits. This is due to inadequate funding for security at ports, a lack of police, inadequate screening of containers, and a lack of Canadian intelligence officers at foreign ports (Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, 2007). As the goods, money, and people flowing through ports increase, so does the involvement of organized crime.



## PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND'S JUSTICE SYSTEM AT A GLANCE

### The Police in Prince Edward Island

The previous pages described how Prince Edward Island's crime rates are the lowest in the nation. On 1 July 2018, 216 police officers, or 1.4 officers for every 1,000 Island residents, were employed in PEI, which is much less than the national average of 1.85 officers and the lowest in the country. Table 2 shows the provincial police strength and the 2018 CSI and violent CSI for the provinces. Although the number of police officers for every 1,000 provincial residents is similar across the nation there is more variation in crime rates. For example, PEI had the lowest levels of overall and violent CSI in the nation and also had the least number of officers per capita for the provinces.

Of the 216 officers deployed in PEI on 1 July 2018, 120 were employed by the RCMP, while the remaining 96 officers were employed by municipal

departments in Charlottetown (n = 59), Summerside (n = 31), and Kensington (n = 6). With the exception of the three cities, the remainder of the province is policed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) "L" Division. The RCMP divides the province into the Kings, Queens, and Prince Districts and has detachments in Charlottetown, Maypoint, Montague, Rosebank, Souris, Summerside, and West Prince. According to the RCMP (2016), it polices "nearly 90,000 of the Island's 140,000 permanent residents, encompassing approximately 95 per cent of the land mass."

Smaller police services throughout the country have been disbanding and one example was the Borden-Carleton force, which had two full-time officers and one-part time member in 2012. The decision to disband these police services is often financial, and contracting with a large police service such as the RCMP is often cheaper for smaller communities. In November 2019 the town of Kensington questioned whether they should continue to have their own police service, and that they were going to carry out a study to identify

**TABLE 2** Police Officers and Crime Severity Index (CSI) in Canada, 2018

	Police Officers per		
	1,000 Residents (2018)	Total CSI (2018)	Violent CSI (2018)
Newfoundland and Labrador	1.7	65.9	70.2
Prince Edward Island	1.4	53.7	48.1
Nova Scotia	1.9	65.2	78.2
New Brunswick	1.6	71.8	76.1
Quebec	1.9	56.6	71.8
Ontario	1.8	60.0	73.4
Manitoba	1.9	125.8	169.8
Saskatchewan	1.9	139.2	138.1
Alberta	1.7	112.1	97.1
British Columbia	1.9	87.7	73.4
Yukon	3.3	170.3	208.7
Northwest Territories	4.2	324.4	421.6
Nunavut	3.5	319.9	550.5

Sources: Adapted from Conor, Robson, and Marcellus (2019); Moreau (2019)

different policing options (Yarr, 2019). Not everybody agrees that shutting down these smaller police services is a good idea. When asked about the disbanding of the police force, a Borden-Carleton resident told a CBC reporter that “You can’t just drive by a community and police it. You have to be there. You have to be a part of the community and know what’s going on, and who’s doing what, and find out what the needs of the community are” (CBC, 2012).

In December 2016 the results of a review of policing in PEI were released by Perivale and Taylor Consulting (2016). These researchers found a number of challenges that need to be overcome in order to increase police effectiveness. For example, small municipal police services sometimes lack the resources to respond to some serious offences or major incidents, as well as special events such as the Cavendish Music Festival. To overcome these challenges, the researchers observed, police services within the province should cooperate more effectively with other agencies and break down barriers to communication and information-sharing (Perivale and Taylor Consulting, 2016). The full report can be accessed at <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/3237769/Crime-Prevention-and-Policing-Service-Model-Review.pdf>.

### Police Training in Prince Edward Island

Most individuals wanting to work with a municipal police force on the Island, such as the Charlottetown Police, first must successfully complete the Atlantic Police Academy Police Science Program at Holland College near Summerside, which provides training for prospective police officers in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. Their training program starts every January and each year about 75 to 80 cadets start the 34-week program. There is a fairly long list of minimum requirements for taking this program, including being 19 years of age or older and being a Grade 12 graduate, although many cadets have some post-secondary education. In addition, all applicants must pass vision and physical health tests, a review of their criminal history, and a full

background check (including a polygraph or “lie detector” examination), and all candidates must complete psychological testing (Holland College, 2020a). The total costs for the cadet program for the 2019-2020 academic year are \$30,034, which includes tuition and uniforms, books, and living expenses (accommodation and meals). According to Holland College (2020b), cadets are required to pass the courses listed in Table 3.

Graduates of the Atlantic Police Academy are qualified to be a police officer although they must still apply to work with a police service, and there are a list of medical requirements, background checks, as well as drug, polygraph, and psychological screenings; although those requirements will vary depending on the department’s requirements. Once hired, officers may be required to

**TABLE 3 Police Training: Holland College**

Course	Hours of Training
Crisis intervention and de-escalation	15
Criminal law	90
Principles of traffic services	45
Social psychology: Police applied sciences	90
Criminal investigations	90
Police vehicle operations and speed measurement devices	60
Workplace communications	30
Occupational health and safety for police	24
Professional patrol tactics	45
Police control tactics	60
Judgmental scenario training	30
Police firearms proficiency and tactical training	80
Active threat response	24
Police physical abilities development	45
On-the-job training/workplace experience	300
Ethics and professionalism	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,037</b>

Source: Adapted from Holland College (2020b).

attend some additional orientation training, and all newly appointed constables serve a 12 month or longer probationary period. During this time, officers are often paired with a field training officer who provides instruction on how to apply their classroom training “to the streets.”

Once officers have successfully passed their probationary period they will participate in ongoing training, paid by their employers, for the remainder of their careers. Many officers aspire to promotions through the ranks (e.g., from constable to corporal) and they may take leadership courses offered by their employer, or attend post-secondary coursework. In addition, while all officers spend their first few years on patrol, many will be employed in special assignments throughout their careers, such as major crime investigation, canine unit, emergency response, or public relations, and they will require specialized training to act in these roles.

Most police officers in PEI work for the RCMP and all of them are trained at the “Depot” in Regina, which was established in 1885. RCMP training lasts for 26 weeks and cadets have little exposure to the community prior to their graduation. Once recruits graduate from the academy, they are required to complete a six-month Field Coaching Program, where they receive on-the-job training from experienced field training officers, who are called field coaches. Table 4 summarizes the specific training areas.

### Prince Edward Island’s Courts

Like most other provinces, there are three levels of courts in PEI. Most people who are arrested make their first appearances in provincial courts in Charlottetown, Summerside, and Georgetown. Altogether, provincial court judges hear all the cases before these courts, including most summary and indictable offences. In addition to hearing adult criminal matters, the provincial courts also hear cases related to youth charged under the federal *Youth Criminal Justice Act* and matters related to the provincial *Highway Traffic Act*.

The Supreme Court of Prince Edward Island is a superior court and employs one chief justice

**TABLE 4 RCMP Recruit Training**

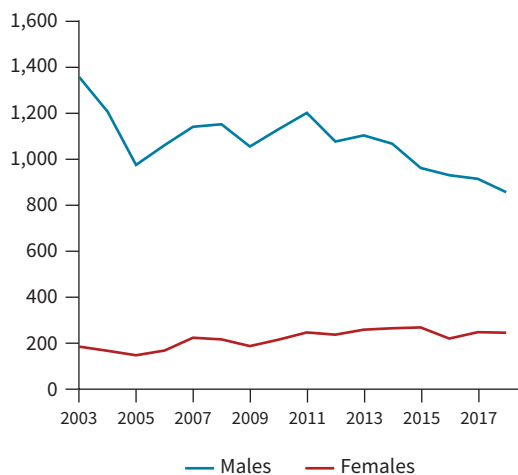
Topic	Hours
Applied police sciences	370
Detachment visits, exams, etc.	112
Firearms	104
Police defensive techniques	99
Police driving	67
Fitness and lifestyle	46
Drill, deportment, and tactics	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>841</b>

Source: Adapted from RCMP (2019).

and four judges, and they sit in Charlottetown and Summerside. These judges hear all serious criminal matters (e.g., homicide cases), and all jury trials or trials by judge alone are heard in these courts. Cases related to families, such as divorce or matters related to child custody, are heard in the Family Court division of the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court also hears matters related to estates, such as the administration of a deceased person’s will, and the Court also hears small claims matters. The Supreme Court also hears appeals from summary criminal cases, and appeals of issues related to family or small claim matters.

The Court of Appeal is the highest level of court in Prince Edward Island and sits in Charlottetown. The Court employs a chief justice and two other judges, and most matters are heard by all three justices. This appellate court hears matters related to appeals of criminal convictions, and offenders or the Crown can appeal the severity of a sentence (both adult and youth matters). According to the Courts of Prince Edward Island (2020, para. 1) website, the court “hears appeals and reviews from provincial administrative boards and tribunals and addresses references from Executive Council and some provincial administrative boards and tribunals.”

Like most other provinces, the number of criminal cases heard by PEI courts has been decreasing. In 2002–3 these courts heard 1,541 cases and that number dropped to 1,100 cases in 2017–18, a 29 per cent decrease. Those changes,



**FIGURE 8** Criminal Cases Heard in Prince Edward Island's Courts, 2002-3 to 2017-18

Source: Adapted from Statistics Canada (2020d) Table 35-10-0027-01

shown in Figure 8, are similar to what is happening in other provinces. What is interesting about these statistics is that while the number of women appearing before the courts has increased by about one-third, the number of men appearing dropped by 36 per cent. We don't have any explanation for this change: Is that outcome due to women's greater involvement in crime today, or does that finding mean that the police are more likely to arrest women today than in the past?

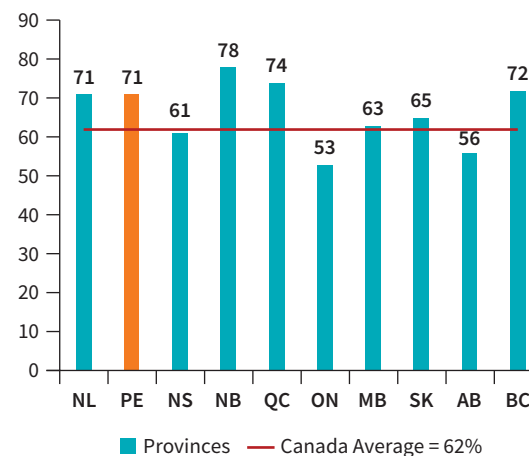
Additionally, the amount of time it takes to process a case (from the person's first appearance until the case is closed) has been increasing. In 2002-3, the median case processing time was 6 days, although that increased to 43 days in 2017-18. While that time has increased, it is still much less than the national average of 121 days. The time it takes to process a case is important because delays can have a significant impact on the administration of justice given the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in *R. v. Jordan*, which mandates that criminal cases be resolved within 18 months (provincial courts) or 30 months (superior courts such as the Supreme Court). As a result of this decision, the prosecution of "thousands of criminal cases are at risk of being tossed out of the courts due to delays caused by underfunding and the increasing complexity of criminal cases" (Lupton, 2016). Russell (2019) reports that nearly 800

cases in the entire nation had been thrown out due to delays, and those cases included people accused of murder, but that doesn't seem to be a problem in PEI given the average case processing time.

Prince Edward Island's prosecutors drop fewer cases than prosecutors in most other provinces. Figure 9 shows that 29 per cent of all cases in the province were withdrawn, stayed or were acquitted in 2017-18. Reevely (2016) believes that one reason for a high number of withdrawals is that police might overcharge some suspects (there is an example on p. 266 of *Exploring Criminal Justice* where a "street person" was charged with nine offences for a single incident) and then some of those charges are later withdrawn. One negative outcome of having a large number of charges is some suspects are remanded in custody awaiting court dates and this might contribute to overcrowding. If overcharging is occurring, it shows how decisions in one part of the justice system (the police) can have an impact on the courts and corrections. The statistics presented in Figure 9 suggest overcharging is not a serious problem in Prince Edward Island.

### Court Security

Ensuring the security of the courts is an important but often overlooked aspect of the justice system. Court appearances can be very stressful for people accused of crimes, victims, and their



**FIGURE 9** Percentage Guilty Verdicts by Province, 2017-18

Source: Adapted from Statistics Canada (2020e) Table 35-10-0027-01

families. The need for security was shown in May 2020 when two men escaped from the Charlottetown courthouse. Ross (2020) describes how security procedures were reviewed and modified after the incident. In the past, court security was carried out by sworn police officers, but these officers were gradually replaced with sheriffs in most provinces. PEI sheriffs are hired as peace officers (with limited police powers), who ensure court security for all three levels of courts (Provincial, Supreme, and the Court of Appeal). Readers interested in becoming a sheriff might consider taking the 24-week sheriffs and public safety officer course at Holland College in Summerside.

### Provincial Corrections

Two adult correctional facilities are operated by the PEI government, the Provincial Correctional Centre in Charlottetown and the Prince County Correctional Centre in Summerside. The Charlottetown facility, which was opened in 1979, houses up to 124 male and female adult inmates and provides custody for both remanded and sentenced adults (PEI Department of Justice and Public Safety, 2016a). The Prince County facility, originally opened in 1876, can house up to 18 men. According to the PEI Department of Justice and Public Safety (2016), “corrections programs staff are responsible to provide intake, assessment, case management, security, rehabilitative programming and discharge planning for adult and youth serving custody sentences/dispositions, police lock-ups, remands and others placed by means of provincial or federal legislation and/or agreements.”

Long sentences in provincial corrections are rare. A review of the 481 people sentenced to serve a term in provincial corrections in PEI in 2017–18 shows that over two-thirds had a sentence of one month or less while over one-fifth (21 per cent) were sentenced to sentences from one to three months. The remaining 12 per cent were sentenced to terms of incarceration longer than three months, and these figures are presented in Table 5. One of the distinctive aspects of sentencing in PEI is that all persons convicted of impaired driving

or refusing to provide a breath sample are sentenced to at least one or two days of incarceration.

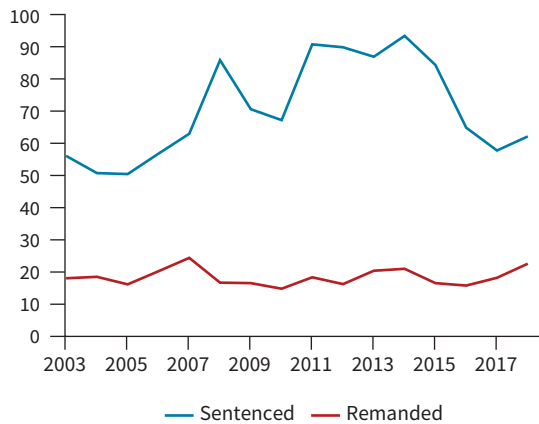
Even though most provincial custodial sentences in PEI are short, an inmate can earn an early release for good behaviour and abiding by institutional rules, and in PEI an individual can reduce the sentence by up to one-third; this is called earned remission (PEI Department of Justice and Public Safety, 2016b). Earned remission is based on federal legislation (the *Prisons and Reformatories Act*) and is available for all sentenced provincial and territorial inmates.

Figure 10 shows the average number of adults incarcerated in PEI facilities from 2002–3 to 2017–18 increased from 74 to 85 (15 per cent), although the numbers peaked in 2013–14 and have dropped since then. That increase created problems for the province in terms of overcrowding in the correctional facilities (CBC, 2015). Both the remanded and sentenced numbers were more or less stable in PEI for that time frame. In most other provinces the number of sentenced inmates decreased while the number of remanded inmates doubled or tripled. According to Malakieh (2019, p. 17), the incarceration rate is 72 inmates for every 100,000 PEI residents, which is somewhat lower than the national average of 83 inmates per 100,000 residents: Manitoba leads the provinces with 231 inmates for every 100,000 residents.

**TABLE 5** Individuals Sentenced to Provincial Custody, PEI, 2017–18

Sentence Length Ordered	Number	%
Total	481	100
One month or less	322	67
Greater than 1 month to 3 months	103	21
Greater than 3 months to 6 months	26	5
Greater than 6 months to 12 months	14	3
Greater than 12 to less than 24 months	7	1
Twenty-four months or more	9	2

Source: Adapted from Statistics Canada (2020f), Table 35-10-0018-01



**FIGURE 10** Remand and Sentenced Inmates, PEI, 2002-3 to 2017-18

Source: Adapted from Statistics Canada (2020g) Table 35-10-0154-01

Incarcerating people is a costly undertaking and Malakieh (2019) reports that the average daily cost to house an inmate in PEI was \$273, which was the highest cost in the nation, and almost twice as much as Alberta (\$150 per day). These costs, however, are much less than housing a federal inmate—which cost \$330 per day in 2017-18 (Malakieh, 2019, p. 17). Said another way, it costs \$99,645 for one year in a Prince Edward Island facility whereas it costs \$120,450 to house an individual in a federal prison. While the public generally believes that incarceration is a good

investment in public safety, it costs more to house a person in a federal prison than sending them to Harvard (tuition, room, and board costs \$101,866 CDN in the 2020-2021 academic year: see Harvard University, 2020).

### Federal Corrections

Federal prisoners are serving terms of imprisonment of two years and longer and about one-quarter are “lifers” who will be under correctional supervision for the rest of their lives. There are five federal facilities in the Atlantic region. All but one of them—the Nova Institution for Women in New Brunswick—have all-male populations housed in minimum, medium, or maximum security settings. Table 7 shows the rated capacity of these institutions in 2017 and their security levels. Three of these prisons are multi-level facilities, meaning that there is more than one security level, and there are several institutions on the Dorchester Penitentiary grounds that offer minimum security (Westmorland Institution) and the site is also home to a Regional Treatment Centre. The Atlantic Institution in Renous, New Brunswick, is a maximum security facility and males convicted of homicide will automatically spend their first two years in custody in that facility.

The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) also operates three community correctional centres (CCCs) in Atlantic Canada, and these are low

**TABLE 6** Incarceration Costs, Prince Edward Island, and Canada, 2018

	Daily Cost	Annual Cost
Cost to House an Inmate in a Provincial Facility in Prince Edward Island	\$273	\$99,645
Cost to House an Inmate in a Provincial Facility (Average: All Provinces)	\$233	\$85,045
Cost to House an Inmate in a Correctional Service of Canada Prison	\$330	\$120,450

Source: Adapted from Malakieh (2019).

**TABLE 7** Federal Penitentiaries in the Atlantic Region

Facility	Bed Capacity	Security Level
Atlantic Institution (Renous, NB)	331	Maximum
Dorchester Penitentiary (Dorchester, NB)	699	Multi-level
Nova Institution for Women (Truro, NS)	99	Multi-level
Shepody Healing Centre (Dorchester, NB)	53	Multi-level
Springhill Institution (Springhill, NS)	636	Medium

Source: Adapted from Correctional Service of Canada (2017).

security community-based facilities that house ex-prisoners released on either day parole or conditional releases. Most CCC residents are working or are attending school and/or rehabilitative programs in the community during the day and return in the evenings. These facilities are located in Saint John (Parrrtown CCC), Halifax (Carlton CCC), and St John's (Newfoundland and Labrador CCC). The CSC also contracts with non-governmental agencies, such as the St Leonard Society, to provide low security housing for people who have been conditionally released or paroled to one of the community-based residential facilities shown in Table 8. Like the CCCs, most people in

**TABLE 8** Community-Based Residential Facilities, Atlantic Canada

New Brunswick	Fredericton
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Island View House</li> </ul>
	Moncton
Newfoundland and Labrador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cannell House (Atlantic Human Services Inc.)</li> <li>Greenfield House (Salvation Army)</li> </ul>
	Saint John
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hart House (John Howard Society)</li> <li>Coverdale Housing for Women</li> </ul>
Nova Scotia	St John's
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emmanuel House</li> <li>Howard House (John Howard Society)</li> <li>Carew Lodge</li> </ul>
	Stephenville
Prince Edward Island	Happy Valley-Goose Bay
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Labrador Friendship Centre</li> </ul>
	Dartmouth
Nova Scotia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Railton House (Salvation Army)</li> </ul>
	Halifax
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sir Sanford Fleming House (St Leonard's Society)</li> <li>Marguerite Centre</li> <li>Nehiley House (St Leonard's Society)</li> </ul>
Nova Scotia	Sydney
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Howard House Association of Cape Breton</li> <li>Elizabeth Fry CRF</li> <li>Elizabeth Fry Satellite Apartment</li> </ul>
	Truro
Prince Edward Island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lavers House—Dismas Society</li> </ul>
	Charlottetown
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lacey House</li> <li>Provincial Addiction Treatment Facility—Queens Region (detox)</li> <li>Outpatient Withdrawal Management—Queens Region (rehab)</li> <li>Talbot House</li> <li>St Eleanor's House</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from Correctional Service of Canada (2020).

these facilities are working, attending school, or participating in rehabilitative programs.

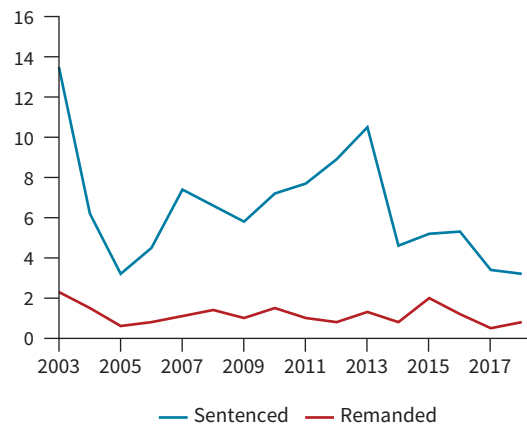
Although there are no federal prisons on the Island the CSC will be training hundreds of new officers at Holland College. Zavarise (2019) reports that up to 300 officers will be trained at the Atlantic Police Academy at the College. Each class will be comprised of 32 students who will be taught by CSC staff members and instructors from the College.

### Youth Corrections

Youth aged 12 to 18 years who have been remanded or sentenced to custody are placed in youth facilities operated by the provincial government. The one facility in the province is located in Summerside. The PEI Youth Centre has a capacity of 16 residents and has one open and one secure custody unit. The programs offered to the residents differ, as youth in open custody are held in less restrictive conditions and they have more access to community activities, such as attending a community school or working. Youth sentenced to secure custody, by contrast, have generally pleaded guilty to more serious offences, or they have histories of escapes from custody that make them less suited for a community-based open custody program. As a result, most of the rehabilitative and educational programs for these youth are delivered within the facility.

Figure 11 shows that the average number of youth held in custody decreased significantly between 2002–3 and 2017–18: from a daily average of 16 to 4 young people (a 75 per cent decrease). The average number of youth on a community-based sentence such as probation (not shown in Figure 11) also decreased, from 151 to 52 (a 66 per cent decrease). This decreased number of incarcerated youth is consistent with what happened in other provinces. Webster, Sprott and Doob (2019) say that the drop in youth correctional populations was the result of:

- (a) restraint in the use of imprisonment; which has been a core value for Canadians since the early 1900s



**FIGURE 11** Average Number of Youth in Custody, Prince Edward Island, 2002–3 to 2017–18

Source: Adapted from Statistics Canada (2020h) Table 35-10-0003-01

- (b) political willingness to reject high youth imprisonment policies
- (c) the introduction of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* in 2003, which made it law to reduce the use of custody

Altogether, after the introduction of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, the provinces took steps to hold youth accountable in the least restrictive environment and youth were supervised in the community rather than incarcerating them.

## REPORT CARD ON PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND'S CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Perrin and Audas (2018) developed a report that graded provinces and territories on their performance on public safety, support for victims, cost and resources, fairness and access to justice, and efficiency, and these marks for the entire nation are shown in Figure 12. Six provinces, including PEI, earned a B, British Columbia and Saskatchewan earned a C+, and Manitoba earned a C grade. With respect to the territories, while Nunavut has a grade of C+, the Northwest Territories and Yukon were given a C grade. The report card for PEI is shown in Table 9, and Perrin and Audas (2018, p. 17) pointed out that the province had the lowest



**TABLE 9** Report Card on Prince Edward Island's Justice System

Objective of Justice System	Indicators	PEI Overall Grade
Public Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The fundamental purpose of the justice system is to protect society by holding offenders accountable, but also by providing supports to rehabilitate them.</li> <li>Measured by: (a) crime and clearance rates; and (b) public perceptions about police enforcing the law, ensuring safety, and satisfaction with safety.</li> </ul>	B
Support for Victims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Victims have rights related to information, protection, participation, and restitution.</li> <li>Measured by: (a) proportion of offenders given restitution orders; (b) referrals to victim's services; and (c) public perceptions about police supplying information and being approachable.</li> </ul>	B+
Cost and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The justice system should be run in a cost-effective manner while meeting its core objectives.</li> <li>Measured by: (a) per capita cost of public safety; (b) per capita cost of corrections, (c) average daily inmate cost; and (d) number of police <i>per capita</i>.</li> </ul>	B
Fairness and Access to Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The justice system must guarantee the constitutional rights of accused persons and provide them with fair and impartial trials, as guaranteed by the <i>Charter</i>.</li> <li>Measured by: (a) legal aid expenditures per crime; (b) percentage of trials with a guilty outcome; (c) proportion of Aboriginal persons in custody versus their prevalence in the population; and (d) public perceptions about the police being fair.</li> </ul>	B
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A well-functioning criminal justice system should ensure prompt and thorough investigations and timely prosecutions and trials.</li> <li>Measured by: (a) Criminal Code incidents per police officer; (b) accused on remand per 1,000 crimes; (c) average criminal case processing time; (d) percentage of cases stayed or withdrawn; and (e) public perceptions about the police responding promptly.</li> </ul>	B+

Source: Adapted from Perrin and Audas (2018, p. 9).

violent crime rate in the country (and low rates of property crime); the lowest rates of failure to comply with court orders, good support for victims, and high satisfaction with the police. Those researchers were critical, however, that the province had high rates of administration of justice offences such as failure to appear in court, breach of probation, and accused persons who were unlawfully at large. The costs of the justice system in PEI were also high and clearance rates (crimes that were solved) were among the lowest in the nation.

## WRONGFUL CONVICTIONS

When somebody is jailed, convicted, or punished for an offence that he or she didn't commit, it shakes the public's faith in the entire justice system. Wrongful convictions date back to the start of justice systems, and since 1993, 23 Canadians were found to have been wrongfully convicted through the efforts of Innocence Canada (2020). Other individuals have been released from prison, or had their convictions overturned, before Innocence Canada



**FIGURE 12** Report Card for the Provinces and Territories

Source: Adapted from Perrin and Audas (2018).

was formed (or they relied on other lawyers for help). Although 90 other prisoners have asked for help from Innocence Canada, none are from Prince Edward Island (Innocence Canada, 2020).

While many of us are familiar with the cases of Donald Marshall Jr from Nova Scotia (profiled on p. 2 of *Exploring Criminal Justice*) a small number of Islanders have been found to be wrongfully convicted. John Charles Cooper, a Charlottetown resident, was arrested on 20 October 2002 for assault with a weapon and making death threats; he was remanded in custody for 14 months, was convicted of these offences on 4 June 2003, and sentenced to two years in prison. Cooper appealed his conviction and “the Court of Appeal set aside the convictions entered by the trial judge on the grounds that they were unreasonable and unsupported by the evidence” (*John Charles Cooper v. The Queen*). He was released from Dorchester Penitentiary (in New Brunswick) on 4 March 2005 after serving 29 months in custody.

After his release, Cooper sued the provincial government and the Charlottetown Police Service for \$1.5 million. According to *The Guardian* (2007) the damages were for “general and special damages for pain and suffering, loss of amenities, loss

of income, diminution of future earning capacity and loss of freedom.” He also sought compensation for “long distance phone calls from prison, loss of GST cheques and legal fees.” Cooper claimed that his conviction was a miscarriage of justice because Charlottetown police officers gave inconsistent evidence that led to his conviction (CBC, 2007). Cooper represented himself in the PEI Supreme Court, and on 30 October 2008, Justice Taylor dismissed his claim, finding that “Cooper’s case was ‘a far cry’ from cases such as Donald Marshall and David Milgaard, who were eventually proven innocent” (CBC News, 2008). Central to the judge’s decision was that the Court of Appeal did not find enough evidence to support a conviction for Collins (e.g., finding him guilty beyond a reasonable doubt); he was not exonerated (proven innocent). The CBC (2008) also reports that in addition to losing his lawsuit he was required to pay \$2,000 in court costs to the police officers who were involved in his case.

Ronald Dalton, who was originally from PEI, was wrongfully convicted of murdering his wife in 1988 when he was living in Newfoundland. Dalton served eight years behind bars prior to being released. Although he never received any help from them, Dalton has become a strong advocate for Innocence Canada, a non-profit agency that has funding shortfalls. McGillivray (2016) cites Dalton as saying “We’re struggling to survive” and “As funding runs out, wait times will get longer, and some Canadians may have to wait more than ten years for Innocence Canada to review their case.” Dalton’s case was reviewed by the Lamer Commission that was formed in Newfoundland and Labrador to review three wrongful convictions, and two of those cases (Ronald Dalton and Gregory Parsons) were prosecuted by the same team of prosecutors (Kennedy, 2016).

### Critical Thinking Questions

1. What is the proper amount of compensation for an individual imprisoned for a crime he or she did not commit, and who then has to live with that stigma?

2. How can we hold the persons who make miscarriages of justice accountable, such as the police and prosecutors involved in a case?
3. Campbell and Denov (2016) estimate that about half of one per cent of convictions in Canada are wrongful, or about four people in 2017–18 in PEI (856 guilty verdicts x .005). What are some outcomes of those miscarriages of justice? Is that number troubling to you?

### Services for Crime Victims

Prince Edward Island's justice system gets "good marks" for providing services to victims (Perrin & Audas, 2018). As noted in *Exploring Criminal Justice*, in the past many victims received shoddy treatment from workers within the criminal justice system. Although crime victims are treated with more respect today, the efforts of criminal justice personnel sometimes fall short. Allen and McCarthy (2018, p. 5) report there were almost 1,100 victims of violent crimes or traffic violations causing death or bodily injury in PEI in 2016 and over one-half of these people were women (women 25 years and over was the biggest group), and 83 per cent of all these victims were adults. Allen and McCarthy (2018, p. 15) say that the:

Department of Justice and Public Safety Victim Services offers a system-based program that assists victims of crime throughout their involvement in the criminal justice system. [and] In addition to the offices of the Victim Services Program, services are also available to victims through specialized community-based programs such as PEI Family Violence Prevention Services and the PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre. In addition, the Island Helpline provides 24 hour telephone support and crisis intervention.

According to the PEI Department of Justice and Public Safety (2020, p. 1), 1,028 cases were referred to victims' services in 2018–19. Table 10 provides a breakdown of the types of offences that result in

**TABLE 10** Victims' Services in PEI, New Cases, 2016–17 to 2018–19

Type of Client	% Breakdown		
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
General (includes break and enter, damage to property, theft, assault, and impaired driving causing injury or death)	44	46	37
Female partner abuse	31	29	33
Other family abuse	10	11	15
Sexual abuse	9	12	13
Commercial/business	6	2	2

Source: Adapted from PEI Department of Justice and Public Safety (2020).

victims seeking help. Slightly more than one-third of the persons referred to these services were a result of general or ordinary crimes, while one-third of these cases were due to some form of female partner abuse. Not surprisingly, the Department of Justice and Public Safety (2020, p. 11) found that the largest number of these referrals (n=270) came from Charlottetown, while fewer cases originated in the Queens District (n=193), Summerside (n=172), and Montague (n=137). With respect to the age and gender of the new cases in 2018–19, the Department of Justice and Public Safety (2020, p. 13) report indicates that 74 per cent of the new clients who received victim services were women. One-half of them (50 per cent) were 18 to 40 years old and almost one-quarter (23 per cent) were 41 to 60 years of age, whereas only 11 per cent were less than 18 years old and 6 per cent were 61 years of age or older.

### SUMMARY

The amount and seriousness of crime vary across the country and this supplement shows that Prince Edward Island has the lowest rates of crime in the nation. Those provincial averages, however, mask the fact that some places in the province have higher rates of crime, and some people are

at high risk of being victimized. Although crime increased in most Canadian provinces between 2014 and 2018, crime dropped in PEI. As a result, PEI residents have much to be thankful for when it comes to crime and their responses to those offences. Because every province has different histories, population characteristics, levels of economic development, political values, and cultural beliefs, the crime control solutions will be different as well. As a result, the personnel working in Prince Edward Island's adult and youth justice systems may respond to antisocial behaviour and crime in a slightly different manner from what occurs in neighbouring provinces or territories.

A report card on the operations of the justice system developed by Perrin and Audas (2018) reveals that PEI, along with five other provinces, earned a B grade for its justice system. Despite those good grades there are some limitations, which suggests there is some room for improvement. While the justice system will never eliminate crime, we can attempt to prevent crimes, reduce harm, respond to the needs of people who have committed crimes, and protect those most at risk of victimization. Learning about the differences in crime problems and how we respond to them makes exploring criminal justice in Canada an interesting undertaking!

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