

# Justice, Law, and the Just Society



Read the following quotations. In groups, reflect on the quotations and discuss your vision of a "just" society.

"The Just Society will be one in which all of our people will have the means and the motivation to participate. The Just Society will be one in which personal and political freedom will be more securely ensured than it has ever been in the past. The Just Society will be one in which the rights of minorities will be safe from the whims of intolerant majorities. The Just Society will be one in which those regions and groups which have not fully shared in the country's affluence will be given a better opportunity. The Just Society will be one where such urban problems as housing and pollution will be attacked through the application of new knowledge and new techniques. The Just Society will be one in which our Indian and Inuit populations will be encouraged to assume the full rights of citizenship through policies which will give them both greater responsibility for their own future and more meaningful equality of opportunity. The Just Society will be a united Canada, united because all of its citizens will be actively involved in the development of a country where equality of opportunity is ensured and individuals are permitted to fulfill themselves in the fashion they judge best."

~ Pierre Elliott Trudeau, former Prime Minister, Official Statement by the Prime Minister, "The Just Society", June 10, 1968

"We are creating the kind of society where the criminal is out of jail before his victim is out of hospital." ~ Richard J. Needham, Canadian writer and humourist

"Law is not justice and a trial is not a scientific inquiry into truth. A trial is the resolution of a dispute." ~ Edson Haines, former judge of the Supreme Court of Ontario

"Canada's legal profession is dominated by rich, old, sexist, white men who discriminate against women and ethnic minorities." ~ Conclusion of a Task Force headed by former Supreme Court Justice Bertha Wilson (1994), *Touchstones for Change: Equality, Diversity and Accountability*.

"Due process of law is a very fine shrine, and it is nice to know that there is a piece of parchment somewhere that says we are equal before the courts; but for a great many Canadians, the fine-flowing phrases of the Bill of Rights are not worth the paper they are written on." ~ Walter Stewart "But Not in Canada"



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"It is often thought that the police represent the law. It would be more accurate to say that they represent the force behind the law." ~ J. Ricker and J. Saywell "How Are We Governed?"

"Four things belong to a judge:  
to hear courteously,  
to answer wisely,  
to consider soberly, and  
to decide impartially."

~ Socrates, Greek philosopher,  
469-399 BCE



"A strong and independent judiciary guarantees that governments act in accordance with our Constitution. Judges give effect to our laws and give meaning to our rights and duties as Canadians. Courts offer a venue for the peaceful resolution of disputes, and for the reasoned and dispassionate discussion of our most pressing social issues. Every judge in Canada is committed to performing this important role skillfully and impartially. Canadians should expect no less." ~ Right Honorable Chief Justice of Canada, Beverly MacLachlan (2004): <["Court services in Aboriginal communities are limited and occasional, beset by delay and misunderstanding. Aboriginal relations with police forces in all parts of the province are marked by mutual suspicion. Aboriginal criticism of the justice system generally has been harsh and pervasive. The need for change was becoming increasingly apparent." ~ Aboriginal Justice Inquiry Commission \(1999\), Manitoba: <\[www.ajic.mb.ca/volumel/chapter1.html#3\]\(http://www.ajic.mb.ca/volumel/chapter1.html#3\)>](http://www.scc-csc.gc.ca>Welcome/index_e.asp</a>></p>
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Recommendations of the Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission:

*That...*

*...the federal and provincial governments recognize the right of Aboriginal people to establish their own justice systems as part of their inherent right to self-government.*

*...the federal and provincial governments assist Aboriginal people in the establishment of Aboriginal justice systems in their communities in a manner that best conforms to the traditions, cultures and wishes of those communities, and the rights of their people.*

~ Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission (1999): <[www.ajic.mb.ca/recommendations.html](http://www.ajic.mb.ca/recommendations.html)>

Source: Canadian Quotations:  
<[www.canadianquotations.com/index.html](http://www.canadianquotations.com/index.html)>