

Federation of Law Societies  
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Fédération des ordres professionnels  
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## **NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON ACCREDITATION**

### **SYLLABUS**

## **CANADIAN CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE**

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## CANADIAN CRIMINAL LAW & PROCEDURE SYLLABUS

### EXAMINATION

The function of the NCA exams is to determine whether applicants demonstrate a passable facility in the examined subject area to enable them to engage competently in the practice of law in Canada. To pass the examination candidates are expected to identify the relevant issues, select and identify the material rules of law as understood in Canada, and explain how the law applies on each of the relevant issues, given the facts presented. Those who fail to identify key issues, or who demonstrate confusion on core legal concepts, or who merely list the issues and describe legal rules without demonstrating how those legal rules apply given the facts of the case will not succeed, as those are the skills being examined.

The knowledge, skills and abilities examined in NCA exams are basically those that a competent lawyer in practice in Canada would be expected to possess.

### MATERIALS

#### Required

- Stephen Coughlan, *Criminal Procedure* (Toronto: Irwin Law, 2008)
- The most up-to-date *Criminal Code* (an annotated *Criminal Code* is recommended). The *Code* will contain the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in an Appendix. **You must have a Criminal Code with you when you attend the exam.** There are a number of published editions available. The most used are the Pocket Criminal Code (Thomson Carswell); Martin's Criminal Code (Canada Law Book) Practitioner's Edition (Lexis Nexis) and Tremeears Criminal Code (Thomson Carswell). Select the version of your choice."

#### Optional

- Kent Roach, *Criminal Law*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed, (Toronto: Irwin Law, 2004) [the 4<sup>th</sup> edition is forthcoming]
- Don Stuart, *Canadian Criminal Law*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed.(Scarborough: Thomson Carswell, 2007)
- Don Stuart, *Learning Canadian Criminal Law*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. (Scarborough: Thomson Carswell, 2006) [this case book is often used by law schools for Criminal Law & Procedure courses]

The optional materials are not necessary in order to write the NCA exam in Criminal Law & Procedure, but candidates should be aware that they are available.

### INTERNET ACCESS TO CASE LAW

Select cases identified in the Syllabus may be available via the internet at the following web sites:

- Supreme Court of Canada decisions (<http://scc.lexum.umontreal.ca/en/index.html>)

- Canadian Legal Information Institute (<http://www.canlii.org/>)

Case law may also be available electronically through commercial services such as LexisNexis / Quicklaw or eCarswell, or through a law school or County or District Court House law libraries.

## **READING LIST**

References to the Coughlan text are shown as “Coughlan pp. xx – yy” and references to the *Criminal Code* are shown as “CC.” All cases included in this syllabus should be read, even when identified as examples or illustrations. You are responsible for the law each decision describes.

## **GENERAL OVERVIEW AND PRELIMINARY MATTERS**

### **1. The Sources of Criminal Law**

With the exception of contempt of court, criminal offences are created in Canada by statute. Most criminal offences are created by *Criminal Code*. Drug trafficking, for example, is made a criminal offence by the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*. The common law cannot be used to create offences in Canada because of concerns related to the principle of legality, and the notion that criminal offences should be clear, certain, and should pre-exist the act being prosecuted. As will be seen below, many rules of criminal procedure are created in the *Criminal Code*, and many other rules of procedure are common law based.

*Frey v. Fedoruk*, [1950] S.C.R. 517  
See CC section 9

While common law offences are not allowed, common law defences are available under Canadian criminal law and can still be created by the courts. As will be seen below, the Supreme Court of Canada recognized a common law defence in *Levis (City) v. Tetrault*, [2006] 1 S.C.R. 420. Moreover, the common law can deeply influence the way that statutory criminal offences are interpreted.

See CC section 8  
See *R. v. Jobidon*, [1991] 2 S.C.R. 714, a case you will be asked to review again when considering the meaning of consent.

### **2. The Power to Create Criminal Offences and Rules of Criminal Procedure**

(a) ***Constitutional Division of Powers Introduced*** - Both the Federal Government and Provincial governments have jurisdiction to create non-criminal offences (regulatory offences) and to use jail to enforce those regulatory offences, but only the Federal Government can create “criminal” offences, or “true crimes”, pursuant to its powers under s. 91 (27) of the *Constitution Act, 1867*. The principles that apply to true crimes differ from those that apply to regulatory offences. These principles will be examined below when regulatory offences are discussed.

Curiously, while they cannot create criminal offences, Canadian provinces do have jurisdiction over the administration of justice within the province under s. 92 (14) of the *Constitution Act, 1867*. For example, the provinces have set up the lowest level of criminal court where the vast majority of cases are actually prosecuted (the provincial courts); it is the provincial Attorneys General who prosecute most offences,

including serious offences; and the provinces have passed statutes setting out juror eligibility within the province. The procedure during criminal hearings, however, is governed by Federal rules and by the common law.

For a summary of the criminal law power see *R. v. Malmo-Levine*, 2003 SCC 74 at paras. 73 - 79

(b) ***The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*** - The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (the “Charter”) imposes limits on the jurisdiction of all governments, subject to s. 1, the “reasonable limitations” clause, and the seldom-used s. 32 “notwithstanding clause.” Since its passage in 1982, the Charter has had such a profound impact on criminal law and procedure that all criminal practitioners need to develop expertise in its operation.

The *Charter* can be used by courts to invalidate offences that Parliament has created, and courts have done so on a number of occasions, but this is not common. It has also been used to strike down rules of criminal procedure, although this too is uncommon.

Read *R. v. Heywood*, [1994] 3 S.C.R. 761 as an illustration of a criminal offence being struck down.

Read *R. v. Oakes*, [1986] 1 S.C.R. 103 as an example of a rule of criminal procedure being struck down, and note the operation of section 1 as a limiting provision. The concepts identified in *Oakes* will be revisited below in discussing the burden of proof.

The *Charter* can also be used as an important interpretive tool. Even when it is not used to strike down a provision, it is the practice of courts to permit constitutional values to influence the way statutes are interpreted.

Read *R. v. Labaye*, [2005] S.C.J. No. 83 as an illustration of how the *Charter* changed the criminal concept of indecency through a progression of cases described therein. You will see that this case provoked a strong dissenting judgment. Bear in mind that what dissenting judges say in opposition to the majority judges is not the law, but that *obiter dictum* explaining the law when no opposition is taken can be a valuable source for legal argument.

The *Charter*’s largest impact on criminal procedure has been in creating constitutional procedural protections, as discussed below.

(c) ***Rules of Practice*** - Section 482 of the Criminal Code permits courts to create rules of practice to govern the administrative mechanics of practice in criminal courts. Although you will not be examined broadly on the Criminal Rules of Practice, Canadian criminal counsel must be intimately familiar with the rules that apply in their jurisdictions.

Read *R. v. Gundy*, [2008] O.J. No. 1410, as an illustration.

See, for example, the *Rules of the Ontario Court of Justice in Criminal Proceedings* (<http://www.ontariocourts.on.ca/ocj/en/rules/>) and the *Criminal Proceedings Rules* (Ontario Superior Court of Justice) (<http://www.ontariocourts.on.ca/scj/en/about/criminal.htm>)

### 3. The Classification of Offences

In Canada, criminal offences are divided into two general categories: “indictable offences” and “summary” (or “summary conviction”) offences. Offences can be “hybrid” in the sense that the prosecutor has the right to elect whether to treat the offence as “indictable” or “summary.” The classification of offences has

important implications for the penalties that are possible, and for the procedure that will be used, including the mode of trial.

See Coughlan, pp. 33 – 38 and the CC provisions cited therein.

#### 4. Interpreting Criminal Provisions

Interpreting the *Criminal Code* and related enactments is not unlike interpreting other statutes. There are special considerations that operate, however. For example:

(a) **Definitions** - The Criminal Code has definitions for many of the terms used but they are not always easy to locate. Section 2 contains definitions that apply throughout the Code. The Code is divided into Parts, and at the beginning of each Part, there will be a definition section that applies solely to that Part. Sometimes definitions are found in or around the relevant statutory provision to be interpreted. See, for example, ss.348(3) and 350, which apply to offences in s. 348(1) (i.e., breaking and entering).

(b) **Strict Construction** - Historically, criminal statutes were interpreted strictly in favour of the liberty of the accused. In other words, the accused would get the benefit of the doubt or ambiguity in matters of interpretation. This principle continues to apply but has been heavily modified by the purposive interpretation.

*R. v. Pare*, [1987] 2 S.C.R. 618

(c) **Purposive Interpretation** - Canadian law makes liberal use of purposive interpretation, in which the language that is used in the provision being construed is interpreted harmoniously with the statute as a whole, with the underlying purpose of the provision in mind so as to best accomplish its underlying purpose, always bearing in mind that the limit on purposive interpretation is that damage cannot be done to the language employed. *R. v. Pare* is an example. Be on the lookout throughout the decisions included in this list for examples of purposive interpretations.

(d) **French/English** - Federal laws like the Criminal Code are passed in both of Canada's official languages. Each version is equally authoritative, and ambiguities in one language can be clarified by the other.

See, for example, *R v J.(D.)*, [2002] O.J. No. 4916 (Ont. C.A.)

(e) **The Charter** - As indicated, the Charter can have an important influence on the way statutory provisions are interpreted because of the presumption that statutes were intended to be constitutionally valid. You have observed this in *R. v. Labaye*, [2005] S.C.J. No. 83 above.

See, for example, *Canadian Foundation for Children, Youth & the Law v Canada (A.G.)*, [2004] 1 S.C.R. 76 where a *Charter* challenge encouraged the Court to read significant content into the concept of "reasonable corrective force." Examine this decision not only for what it shows about legal technique, and the rule of law doctrine of "void for vagueness," but also for what it says about the operation of the defence of corrective force.

## THE ELEMENTS OF A CRIMINAL or REGULATORY OFFENCE

Each criminal offence has “elements” that must be present before a conviction is possible. Indeed, all elements of the offence must be present at the same time, or there will be no crime (see *R. v. Williams* below). As is the case internationally, it is convenient to think of the elements of an offence as:

- The physical elements or *actus reus* of the offence (the act that must be performed or omission that is proscribed, the circumstances or conditions in which the act must occur, and any consequence that must be caused by the act); and
- The mental or *mens rea* elements of the offence.

In Canadian law, the mental elements normally describe the actual or “subjective” state of mind of the accused (things such as intent, or planning and premeditation, or recklessness, or knowledge, or willful blindness.). It is becoming increasingly common, however, to produce offences that have an objective *mens rea*, such as negligence. Objective *mens rea* is determined not according to the state of mind of the accused (the subject), but according to what a reasonable person in the position of the accused would have known or foreseen.

As a general proposition of interpretation, a true crime will be interpreted as requiring subjective *mens rea* unless it is clear that Parliament wished to impose objective liability. Identifying what the elements of an offence are is a challenging enterprise, turning on interpretation of the offence and familiarity with relevant precedents and principles. It is not possible or desirable to attempt here to “teach” the elements of every offence. Instead, some offences will be selected for their illustrative value in demonstrating the key *actus reus* and *mens rea* concepts. Applicants are expected to be able to demonstrate interpretive and application skills for all criminal offences, whether included in these reading materials or not.

### 4. The Actus Reus

(a) **Acts and Statutory Conditions** - The act must be the act of the accused and must be the kind of act described in the relevant provision. Further, the act must be committed under the circumstances or conditions specified in the offence. For example, an accused cannot be convicted of the offence of break and enter with intent to commit a criminal offence pursuant to s. 348 (1) (a) unless he “breaks” and “enters” something that qualifies as a “place” according to the Criminal Code, with the relevant *mens rea*.

See, for examples of the interpretation of acts and *actus reus* conditions:

*R v D'Angelo*, [2002] O.J. No. 4312 (Ont. C.A.)

*R v J.(D.)*, [2002] O.J. No. 4916 (Ont. C.A.) (reviewed above).

(b) **Acts Must be “Voluntary” or “Willed”** – The act described by the offence must be “voluntary” in the sense that it must be the willed act of the accused. For example, a man in the throes of a seizure does not “will” his movements; it would be no assault on his part even if his arm was to strike another without the other’s consent. It would have been possible to deal with this kind of issue using the *mens rea* concept by suggesting that he did not intend to strike the other, but Canadian law has also accepted that unless a physical motion is willful, it is not fair to call it an act of the accused person. This is the foundation for the automatism defence, discussed below. It is easier to understand the concept of voluntariness together with automatism authorities, so this discussion will be deferred until the voluntariness-based defences are discussed below.

(c) **The “Act” of Possession** - At times part of the actus reus for an offence has an inherent mental element to it, as it does with the important element, common to many offences, of “possession.” This concept demonstrates that the divide between the actus reus and mens rea is not a solid one. What matters is that lawyers appreciate what the elements are, regardless of how they are characterized.

See CC section 4(3), *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* section 2 (which will be at the back of most published *Criminal Code* materials).

See *R. v. York* (2005), 193 C.C.C. (3d) 331 (B.C.C.A.) for the law of manual possession

See *R. v. Marshall*, [1969] 3 C.C.C. 149 (Alta. C.A.) and *R. v. Terrence*, [1983] 1 S.C.R. 357 for the concept of constructive joint possession

See *R. v. Pham*, [2005] O.J. No. 5127 (Ont. C.A.) for the application of these concepts to possession of materials found in a residence

(d) **Consent as an Element of the Actus Reus** - Often the question of absence of consent by the victim is an important actus reus condition that must be present for offences to occur. Consent is a complex idea, animated by statute and the common law.

*R. v. Ewanchuk*, [1999] 1 S.C.R. 330

*R. v. Jobidon*, [1991] 2 S.C.R. 714 (reviewed above as in illustration of the common law influence on the reach of statutory provisions)

*R. v. Cuerrier*, [1998] 2 S.C.R. 371

(e) **Causation** - Where the relevant offence prescribes a “consequence” that must occur before the offence is complete, the Crown prosecutor must prove that the accused caused the consequence to occur, beyond a reasonable doubt. As Williams shows, if causation is not proved, the accused cannot be convicted of an offence that requires his act to produce a prohibited consequence. Menezes shows that causation is a two-stage analysis, requiring “factual causation” and “legal or imputable causation.” Nette deals with the higher standard of responsibility of imputable cause that is required to secure a first-degree murder conviction, and it illustrates the legal causation principle of the “thin skull.” Both Nette and Menezes illustrate how most imputable causation principles explain why blame can be assigned in criminal cases, in spite of arguments that might, in civil cases, reduce or even eliminate civil liability.

*R. v. Williams*, [2003] 2 S.C.R. 134

*R. v. Menezes*, [2002] O.J. No. 551 (Ont. S.Ct. of J.)

*R. v. Nette*, [2001] 3 S.C.R. 488

(f) **Omissions** - Some offences do not require a positive act by the accused. Rather, they can be committed by a showing that the accused failed to act, or omitted to act. Whether an offence can occur by “omission” is a question of construction. To be guilty by omission (1) the offence must contemplate guilt for omissions, (2) the accused must be placed under a legal duty to act either by the provision charging him or by some incorporated provision, and (3) the omission in question must be a failure to fulfill that legal duty.

*R. v. Moore*, [1979] 1 S.C.R. 195

*R. v. Peterson*, [2005] O.J. No. 4450 (Ont. C.A.), leave to appeal refused.

*R. v. Browne* (1997), 116 C.C.C. (3d) 183 (Ont. C.A.), leave to appeal refused

## 6. Subjective Mens Rea

As indicated, subjective *mens rea* focuses on the actual state of mind of the subject of the prosecution, namely, the accused. Since what someone thinks or wants or knows is personal to him unless

communicated, subjective *mens rea* ordinarily must be gleaned circumstantially, including by using the common sense inference that persons usually tend to intend the natural consequences of their acts. Since the state of “knowledge” is not often manifested circumstantially the way apparent intent is, the law will assume that the accused knew of the elements of the offence unless the so-called “defence of mistake of fact,” discussed below, is made out. The close link between knowledge and mistake of fact makes it sensible to discuss the “defence” together with this *mens rea* concept.

There are many states of mind described by the various *Criminal Code* provisions. For example, one form of first degree murder requires proof of planning and deliberation (premeditation), while second degree murder requires only that the accused intend to cause death, or intend to cause bodily harm that *he* knows is likely to cause death.

Most offences require more than one mental state to exist. For example, to be guilty of murder, the accused must know that the living thing he is killing is a human being and intend to cause death to that human being. A sexual assailant must intend to touch the complainant, and know that she is not consenting (although as indicated, that knowledge will be assumed absent a mistake of fact defence being raised successfully).

It is a close exercise of construction to see what mental states are required by a particular offence. If an offence is explicit and specifies the relevant state of mind, then only that state of mind will suffice. This is why “assault” contrary to section 265 requires “intentional” touching, and not simply reckless touching. Many offences do not specify the relevant mental state. If a true crime is silent as to the mental state and the offence requires a consequence, it is implied that intention or “recklessness” in bringing out the consequence will suffice (that presumption was rebutted for the offence charged in *R. v. Buzanga and Durocher* below, requiring the Crown to prove actual intention to bring about the consequence).

Again, subject to exception (see for example C.C. s. 150.1) where an offence sets out conditions or circumstances that have to exist, the accused must, as a general rule, know that those conditions or circumstances exist before the offence can be committed, although the *mens rea* known as “willful blindness” can substitute for full knowledge. Use the *mens rea* provided for in the relevant provision, as construed according to relevant criminal law principles. In the cases included below, the most common mental states are identified and illustrated:

(a) ***Intention, and Ulterior Mens Rea*** – Intention is a complex idea. The accused must have the very intention required by the relevant provision. For example, *Vandergraff* intended to throw the object, but not to make contact with the victim. His “assault” was not intended and he was not guilty. He could have been charged with criminal negligence causing injury, but the wrong charge was laid. For his part *Murray* intended to hold the Bernardo tapes, but not for the purpose of obstructing justice. He was therefore not guilty. *R.(J.S.)* intended to shoot into a crowd, with intent to kill a human being (albeit not the one killed), opening the door to his possible murder conviction during his upcoming trial, depending on how the evidence comes out.

*R. v. Vandergraff*, [1994] M.J. No. 503 (Man. C.A.)

*R. v Murray*, [2000] O.J. No. 2182 (Ont. S.C.J.)

*R. v. J.S.R.*, 2008 O.N.C.A. 544

(b) ***Subjective Mens Rea with Objective Features*** - Some criminal offences use standards to define criminal conduct. For example, some assaults are sexual in their nature, and others are not. Some acts are dishonest, and others are not. It is not sensible to require the accused to have a subjective appreciation that the relevant criminal standard has been met before a conviction can follow since that would permit the content of offences to vary from offender to offender. For example, the accused can commit fraud if he

intends the relevant transaction, even if he does not appreciate that a transaction of that nature is “dishonest.” If it were otherwise objective dishonest people would be held to lower standards than the rest of us. Or an accused can commit sexual assault if he intends to touch another, even if he does not believe that the contact is sexual in nature, so long as it is.

*R. v. Theroux*, [1993] 2 S.C.R. 5

*R. v. Chase*, [1987] 2 S.C.R. 293

(c) **Recklessness** – Recklessness is a subjective state of mind that requires the accused to act in spite of actually and personally foreseeing the risk that if they do act, the prohibited consequence will be brought about. It therefore differs from negligence which can apply even if the actor does not personally see the risk, provided a reasonable person would have. Still, recklessness is a subjective *mens rea* with objective features because it exists only where it is objectively unjustifiable to take that risk the accused understood he was taking. The fact that the accused may have felt the risk to be justifiable would be no answer. Recklessness will apply where the provision creates a consequence, but does not, as a matter of construction, require some more limited kind of *mens rea*.

See *R. v. Theroux*, above

*R. v. Buzzanga and Durocher* (1979), 25 O.R. (2d) 705 (Ont. C.A.)

(d) **Knowledge** – As indicated, bearing in mind what is said above about standards of criminality, the accused must generally know that the conditions of the *actus reus* exist. For example, an accused cannot be convicted of assaulting a police officer, if she does not know the victim is a police officer. Generally, it is unrealistic to expect the Crown to prove what the accused knows, so we presume the accused knows of the relevant conditions, unless the accused presents a “mistake of fact defence.” In the sexual offence context, the mistake of fact defence is heavily limited for policy reasons.

*R. v. Ewanchuk*, [1999] 1 S.C.R. 330

(e) **Willful Blindness** – Willful blindness is related to but distinct from recklessness. It is a subjective state of mind, requiring that the accused personally sees the risk of a fact, but then willfully avoids confirmation so as to be able to deny knowledge. This concept fits best when used as a substitute for knowledge, although courts (and Parliament in C.C. s. 273.2) have an unfortunate habit of using “willful blindness” terminology as interchangeable with recklessness. This leads to confusion. If the two concepts were indeed interchangeable willful blindness would disappear because everyone who is willfully blind is necessarily reckless – if you suspect that a fact exists but willfully avoid confirmation so as to be able to deny knowledge (and are willfully blind) then you must necessarily be seeing and taking an unjustifiable risk that the fact may exist (and are reckless). The two concepts are not the same and should not be equated.

*R. v. Currie* (1975), 24 C.C.C. (2d) 292 (Ont.C.A.)

*R. v. Duong* (1998), 15 C.R. (5<sup>th</sup>) 209 (Ont.C.A.)

*R. v. Vinikurov*, [2001] A.J. No. 612 (Alta C.A.)

## 7. Objective Mens Rea and True Crimes

Negligence is judged objectively, according to what a reasonable person would know or understand or how a reasonable person would act. The criminal law has long been uncomfortable with objective fault, as historically the criminal law responded to an “evil” mind, and careless people may be dangerous but they are not evil. Gradually the law has come to accept objective fault, although this has not happened for murder, where, as a matter of constitutional law, convictions must be based on subjective *mens rea* in the form of full scale intention. For crimes using objective fault as the *mens rea*, “penal negligence” - a more

restricted form of negligence - is generally required. The exception is with “predicate offences,” those aggravated forms of offence that apply when serious consequences result, and that include within their elements another complete but lesser offence, a “predicate” offence. For predicate offences the consequence need not be brought about by “penal negligence.” It is enough if the accused commits the underlying or predicate offence, and that the aggravated consequence that has been thereby caused was objectively foreseeable.

*R. v. Martineau*, [1990] 2 S.C.R. 633

*R. v. Creighton*, [1993] 3 S.C.R. 3

*R. v. Beatty*, [2008] S.C.J. No. 5.

*R. v. DeSousa* [1992] 2 S.C.R. 944

## 8. Regulatory Offences

Regulatory offences can be created by any level of government. Regulatory offences can be full *mens rea* offences just as true crimes are, but a clear indication that *mens rea* is required is needed before regulatory offences will be interpreted as having *mens rea* elements. They are presumed to be “strict liability” offences (offences that can be committed by simple, non-penal negligence, with the accused bearing the burden of proving an absence of negligence to avoid conviction). Some regulatory offences operate as absolute liability offences that will be committed whenever the relevant *actus reus* is proved, provided this is clearly what the legislators intended when establishing the offence. Given the different modes of interpretation used, it is important to be able to distinguish true crimes from regulatory offences.

*R. v. Sault Ste. Marie*, [1978] 2 S.C.R. 1299

*R. v. Chapin*, [1979] 2 S.C.R. 121

*Reference re Section 94(2) of the Motor Vehicle Act (B.C.)*, [1985] 2 S.C.R. 486

*R. v. Cancoil Thermal* (1986), 52 C.R. (3d) 188 (Ont. C.A.).

*Levis (City) v Tetreault*, [2006] S.C.J. No. 12

## EXTENSIONS OF CRIMINAL LIABILITY

### 9. Aiding and Abetting

It is not only the person who actually performs the *actus reus* (the “principal” offender) who can be convicted of the offence. So too can those who aid (physically support) or abet (encourage) the accused to commit the offence. Indeed, persons who aid and abet one offence can, in some circumstances, be convicted of offences they did not intend to aid or abet, provided that offence is a foreseeable outcome of the offence they did intend to aid or abet.

See CC s. 21

*R. v. Dunlop and Sylvester*, [1979] 2 S.C.R. 881

*R. v. Logan*, [1990] 2 S.C.R. 731

### 10. Counseling

An accused can be convicted of counseling offences, whether or not the offences counseled are actually committed. If the offences counseled are committed, CC. s. 23 operates. If they are not committed, CC. s. 464 operates.

*R. v. Hamilton*, [2005] 2 S.C.R. 432

## 11. Attempts

As the counseling offence in CC. s. 464 illustrates, not all crimes need to be complete before an offence arises. There is (1) the discrete offence of counseling, (2) the offence of conspiracy in which the agreement to commit a crime is a crime, and (3) there is liability for attempting to commit an offence. *Ancio* shows the relevant *mens rea* for attempts, and *Deutsch* is instructive on when the attempt proceeds far enough to constitute a crime. You should be aware that the fact that an offence is legally impossible in the factual circumstances is no defence to an attempt charge, but it is not an offence to try to commit an act you believe is an offence, when it is not actually an offence. *Dery* exposes the limits of piggy-backing incomplete forms of liability.

See CC ss. 463, 465, 660  
*R. v. Ancio*, [1984] 1 S.C.R. 225  
*R. v. Deutsch*, [1986] 2 S.C.R. 2  
*R. v. Dery*, [2006] S.C.J. No. 53

## 12. Corporate and Association Liability

Corporations are liable for the acts of their agents for strict and absolute liability offences. Since these kinds of offences turn on the *actus reus* alone, there is no need to use any legal devices to ascribe *mens rea* to the corporation and so the *Criminal Code* corporate liability provisions do not apply to regulatory offences. For true crimes the *Criminal Code* sets out standards for corporate and association liability. Section 22.1 applies to objective fault or negligence offences where an association is charged, and s. 22.2 applies to subjective *mens rea* offences charged against an association. See these provisions.

## SELECT CRIMINAL DEFENCES

Not all criminal defences are listed below. For example, s. 25 of the *Criminal Code* permits law enforcement personnel to use some force to carry out their duties, s. 40 permits the defence of property, and there is a general *de minimis non curat lex* defence gaining recognition that can be used to resist prosecution for trivial legal violations. The defence of provocation is a partial defence to murder alone. There are also procedural defences such as entrapment, and double jeopardy. Charges can be “stayed” pursuant to s. 11 (b) and 24 of the *Charter* because of unreasonable delay. You are responsible only for the select defences described below.

## 13. Mental Disorder

Section 16 of the *Criminal Code* modifies the common law defence of insanity. To have access to this defence the accused must establish that he has a “mental disorder” as defined by the case law and that it affected him in one or both of the ways described in s.16 (1). *R. v. Cooper* provides a definition of mental disorder, although it has been modified by *R. v. Park* (discussed below). *Cooper* also stresses the significance of the concept of “appreciates” while *R. v. Kjeldson* describes how the defence works for sociopathic or psychopathic offenders. *R. v. Oommen* edifies us about the meaning of “wrong.”

*R. v. Cooper*, [1980] 1 S.C.R. 1149  
*R. v. Kjeldson*, [1981] 2 S.C.R. 617  
*R. v. Oommen*, [1994] 2 S.C.R. 507

#### 14. Voluntary Acts “Negating” the Actus Reus and Automatism

As indicated above, the accused does not satisfy the *actus reus* requirement unless his act is willed. Some courts have acquitted individuals who reflexively strike out, using the specious reasoning that their physical act was not willed, but the legitimacy of this reasoning is questionable. A more sophisticated application of the voluntariness concept was employed in *R. v. Swaby*.

It is the “voluntariness” concept that explains the defence of automatism, which operates on the theory that the accused’s physical motions were not culpable where they are not voluntary or thought-directed or conscious, as in the sleep-walking case of *R. v. Parks*. Please note that automatism will not realistically operate in any case where the accused appears conscious of his conduct – it is reserved to those unusual cases where there appears to be some disconnect between the actions of the accused and his conscious will. The result of the *Parks* decision was controversial enough that the Supreme Court of Canada took procedural steps to cut the defence back in *R. v. Stone*, although in *R. v. Fontaine* some of the excessive language of *Stone* was qualified by the Court.

Note that “automatism” is divided into two categories, “insane (or mental disorder) automatism” and “non-insane (non-mental disorder) automatism.” Where a court finds “insane automatism” the real defence it is applying is “mental disorder,” since an accused person who is automatistic because of a disease of the mind cannot appreciate the nature and quality of his act or have the capacity to understand that the act is wrong. If the defence that applies in “non-insane automatism,” a complete acquittal is appropriate, although *Stone* has stacked the deck against this kind of defence succeeding.

*R. v. Swaby*, [2001] O.J. No. 2390 (Ont.C.A.)

*R. v. Parks*, [1992] 2 S.C.R. 871

*R. v. Stone*, [1999] 2 S.C.R. 290

*R. v. Fontaine*, [2004] 1 S.C.R. 702

#### 15. Simple Intoxication

Intoxication does not operate as a justification or excuse for criminal conduct. This so-called defence of intoxication (simple intoxication) operates only if proof of the intoxication helps leave the judge or jury in reasonable doubt over whether the accused formed the relevant *mens rea*. The law is hostile to this claim. It therefore limits the defence to “specific intent” offences. Thus, for “general intent” offences, the question of whether the accused had the relevant *mens rea* will be assessed on the assumption that the accused was not intoxicated - even if he was. In other words, the law of simple intoxication operates less as a defence than as a way of limiting cases where the judge or jury can factor intoxication into *mens rea* determinations. The concept of a “specific intent” and “general intent” offence is described in the extreme intoxication case of *R. v. Daviault* below. Please note that in Canada, the inquiry is no longer into “capacity to form the intent” as it was in common law England – the defence applies if intoxication prevents the formation of the specific intent required by the relevant section.

*R. v. Bernard*, [1988] 2 S.C.R. 833

*R. v. Robinson*, [1996] 1 S.C.R. 683

#### 16. Extreme Intoxication

This defence was created in *R. v. Daviault* under the influence of the *Charter*. Extreme intoxication is distinct from the simple intoxication defence. Where extreme intoxication applies, it can operate as a defence to any offence, whether specific intent or general intent. The theory behind the defence is that a person can become intoxicated enough that his mind may cease to operate sufficiently to make conscious

choices relating to his actions. Scientifically, the premise that this can happen is controversial, although *Daviault* recognized that if this were to occur the *Charter* would require an acquittal since voluntariness is a principle of fundamental justice. *Daviault* was so controversial that Parliament immediately enacted s. 33.1 of the *Criminal Code* to eradicate the defence in sexual offence and violence cases. This means that, subject to *Charter* challenge [Canadian courts are split on whether s. 33.1 is constitutionally valid] extreme intoxication can only be used for other kinds of offences. Be aware that nothing in s. 33.1 abolishes the defence of simple intoxication – it limits only the defence of extreme intoxication.

*R. v. Daviault*, [1994] 3 S.C.R. 63  
C.C. s. 33.1

## 17. Defence of the Person

Self-defence is a complex defence in Canada. There are four separate but potentially overlapping statutory defences. All of the defences apply where the accused is being unlawfully assaulted, or reasonably believes he is about to be unlawfully assaulted but each of the four separate offences has its own additional requirements that must be satisfied.

- Section 34(1) applies where the accused does not provoke the assault being defended against, and defends against it without intending to cause death or grievous bodily harm, whether or not death or grievous bodily harm is caused.
- Section 34(2) applies whether or not the accused provoked the assault being defended against and intends to cause death or grievous bodily harm.
- Section 35 applies where the accused provoked the assault, but this defence has lost much of its relevance given that section 34(2), which is less restrictive than section 35, can be used where assaults are provoked. The concept of provocation is defined for the purposes of self-defence in section 36.
- Section 37 operates as a general defence that is broad enough to subsume the other defences but courts tend not to use it if any of the other provisions apply.

*Pintar* explains the relationship between sections 34(1) and (2), and the general approach that should be taken to using the various defences. As *Cinous* shows, each of these defences has both subjective and objective components that have to be satisfied. *Lavallee* illustrates the defence applied in the battered women context.

*R. v. Pintar*, [1996] O.J. No. 3451 (Ont. C.A.)  
*R. v. Cinous*, [2002] 2 S.C.R. 3  
*R v Lavallee*, [1990] 1 S.C.R. 852

## 18. Necessity

The defence of necessity permits the conduct of the accused to be excused where its elements are met. The defence is heavily circumscribed.

*R. v. Latimer*, [2001] 1 S.C.R. 3

## 19. Duress

The defence of duress is available under section 17 of the *Criminal Code* and at common law. Section 17 identifies a limited defence, but the common law and *Charter* have been used to extend its application.

*R. v. Hibbert*, [1995] 2 S.C.R. 973

*R. v. Ruzic*, [2001] 1 S.C.R. 687

## THE CRIMINAL CHARGE

### 20. Laying the Charge

Coughlan, pp. 150 – 154; 294 – 296; 41 - 50

### 21. The Significance of the Charge

In Canada, a trial is not an inquiry into whether the accused has committed some criminal offence. It is a trial to determine whether the Crown prosecutor can prove the specific allegation that has been made, beyond a reasonable doubt. The accused is in jeopardy of conviction only for the offence charged, and for any offences that are “included” in the criminal charge.

*R. v. G.R.*, [2005] S.C.J. No. 45

### 22. The Validity of the Charge

Coughlan, pp.296 - 312

## THE ADVERSARIAL PROCEEDING

### 23. The Adversarial Process

As indicated, a trial is the opportunity for the Crown prosecutor to prove the specific allegation made in the charge (information or indictment) beyond a reasonable doubt. The key characteristic of the Canadian criminal trial is therefore the specific allegation, canvassed above in the discussion of the charge. This is done during a trial. It is helpful to understand the trial process to situate what follows:

Coughlan, pp. 312 - 331

(a) ***The Presumption of Innocence and the Ultimate Standard of Proof*** – At a Canadian trial, the accused is presumed to be innocent, a right guaranteed by s.11(d) of the *Charter*. This means that ultimately, at the end of the whole case, the Crown must prove the guilt of the accused beyond a reasonable doubt. This is the Crown’s ultimate burden in both a criminal or regulatory prosecution. The meaning of proof beyond a reasonable doubt is described in *R. v. Lifchus* and in *R. v. Dinardo*.

*R. v. Lifchus*, [1997] 3 S.C.R. 320

*R. v. S.(J.H.)*, [2008] S.C.J. No. 30

*R. v. Dinardo*, [2008] S.C.J. No. 24

(b) **Other Burdens** – While the Crown prosecutor must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at the end of the case, there are other burdens of proof that operate during the criminal process. There are “evidential” burdens that some rules of law impose in order for a party who wishes a matter to be placed in issue to succeed in having that matter placed in issue. For example, if at the end of the Crown’s case in chief the defence argues that there is no “case to meet” and requests a “directed verdict of acquittal” the judge will evaluate whether the Crown has shown a *prima facie* case. This is the same standard that applies where the accused is entitled to and requests a preliminary inquiry to determine whether there is a case to answer; the preliminary inquiry judge will discharge the accused unless the Crown can show a *prima facie* case. The meaning of the *prima facie* case is discussed in *R. v. Arcuri* below.

Even the accused must at times satisfy an evidential burden in order to have a matter placed in issue. Indeed, if the accused wants to have a defence considered, the accused must show that the defence has an “air of reality” to it. If the accused succeeds, the judge must consider the defence, and in a jury trial must direct the jury on the law that applies to that defence: *R. v. Cinous* and *R. v. Fontaine* illustrate this.

There are numerous rules of evidence called “presumptions” that operate to assign burdens of proof on the accused. A presumption is a rule of law that directs judges and jury to assume that a fact is true (known as the “presumed fact”) in any case where the Crown proves that another fact is true (known as the “basic fact”), unless the accused can rebut the presumed fact according to the assigned standard of proof. Those presumptions known as “mandatory presumptions” can be rebutted by the accused simply raising a reasonable doubt about whether the presumed fact follows from the basic fact. Where a mandatory presumption is rebutted, the “presumed fact” falls back into issue notwithstanding the presumption, and must be proved by the Crown in the ordinary way, without the assistance of the presumption.

Other presumptions operate as “reverse onus provisions,” deeming the presumed fact to exist where the Crown proves the basic fact unless the accused disproves the presumed fact on the balance of probabilities. A presumption can be easily recognized as a “mandatory presumption” because the legal rule raising the presumption will use the term “evidence to the contrary” to describe the burden of rebuttal. A presumption will be interpreted as a “mandatory presumption” where it fails to set out the required standard of rebuttal because of s. 25 (1) of the *Interpretation Act*. Many presumptions operate in alcohol driving prosecutions and are used to determine whether the accused has more than a legal amount of alcohol in his blood while driving or having care or control of a motor vehicle: See, for example, s. 258 (1) (a), [a reverse onus provision] and ss. 258 (1) (c), (d.1) and (g), all mandatory presumptions. Presumptions are *prima facie* contrary to the *Charter* and must be saved under s. 1.

*R. v. Arcuri*, [2001] S.C.J. No. 52

*R. v. Cinous*, [2002] S.C.J. No. 28

*R. v. Fontaine*, [2004] S.C.J. No. 23

*R. v. Oakes*, [1986] 1 S.C.R. 103

*R. v. Boucher*, [2005] S.C.J. No. 73

(c) **The Neutral Impartial Trier** - Another critical component of the accusatorial system is the presence of a neutral, impartial trier of law (to make legal decisions) and a neutral impartial trier of fact (to make factual findings at the end of the trial). In Canada, more than 95% of all criminal trials are conducted by a judge alone, so the judge performs the role both of the trier of law and the trier of fact. Where there is a jury trial, the judge acts as the trier of law, and the jury as the trier of fact. This means that the judge makes all legal and procedural decisions during the trial, and directs the jury by training them in the law that applies. The jury then makes the factual decision and renders the holding. In Canada the appropriate sentence is a question of law, and therefore sentencing is done by the judge and not by the jury. Indeed, the jury should not be told of the possible sentences for fear that this will inspire a sympathetic rather than a legal verdict. Requiring the judge to remain neutral and impartial does not require the judge to remain

passive. Still, the essence of the adversarial system is that the parties initiate the proof that is brought forward, not the judge.

Coughlan, pp. 339 - 349

*R. v. Gunning*, [2005] S.C.J. No. 25

*R. v. Hamilton*, [2004] O.J. No. 3252 (Ont. C.A.)

(d) ***The Role of the Prosecutor*** - The prosecutor is an advocate, but also a quasi-judicial officer. This means that the prosecutor cannot act solely as an advocate, but must make decisions in the interests of justice and the larger public interest, including the interests of the accused. The prosecutor has many discretionary decisions that can be made and should act as a “minister of justice.”

See, for example, Chapter IX (The Lawyer as Advocate) of the Canadian Bar Association *Code of Professional Conduct*

(<http://www.cba.org/CBA/activities/code/>). Candidates should consult the Rules of Professional Conduct in force in the jurisdiction where they are writing by reviewing the Role of the Prosecutor.

*R. v. Cook*, [1997] 1 S.C.R. 1113

*R v. Proulx*, [2001] S.C.J. No. 65

*Krieger v. Law Society of Alberta*, [2002] S.C.J. No. 45

(e) ***The Role of the Defence*** - The defence counsel is an officer of the court, and therefore must be respectful and honest with the court and must not attempt to mislead the court as to the state of the law. Subject to this and the rules of law and ethics, the defence counsel is obliged to act solely in the interests of the accused, advising the accused on the implications of, and propriety, of pleading guilty, securing advantage of all procedural and constitutional protections available to the accused that are not properly waived; and if the accused pleads not guilty, preparing the case fully, challenging the sufficiency of prosecutorial evidence, and advancing all defences that properly arise.

See, for example, Chapter IX (The Lawyer as Advocate) of the Canadian Bar Association *Code of Professional Conduct*

(<http://www.cba.org/CBA/activities/code/>). Candidates should consult the Rules of Professional Conduct in force in the jurisdiction where they are writing by reviewing the Role of the defence counsel, including relating to pleas of guilty.

## GETTING TO THE TRIAL: THE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION

### 24. Police Powers

Police officers are independent of the Crown prosecutor in Canada. This independence is important to permit the prosecutor to act as a quasi-judicial officer, and not get too close to the mind-set of an investigator. Still, the police will often seek legal advice from Crown prosecutors, including on the wording of search warrants and the like. In the interests of securing liberty, the powers of the police are constrained by law, although can be derived from statute, common law and by implication from statute and common law.

Police powers are also significantly limited by the *Charter*, most significantly s. 8 (unreasonable search or seizure) and s. 9 (arbitrary detention). Courts have undertaken a careful balancing of police powers in an attempt to ensure respect for liberty, without undermining the effectiveness of police investigations and law enforcement. The law of evidence supports limits on police powers. Although not covered in this

examination, individuals have the right to remain silent in their dealings with the police, what they say cannot be admitted if it is not “voluntary.” Where there has been an unconstitutional search or arbitrary detention, evidence that has been obtained as a result *may* be excluded from consideration. Police officers also have significant obligations to perform in securing the right to counsel for the subject, again, obligations that go beyond this examination.

Coughlan pp. 11 – 23 (general police powers)  
Coughlan pp. 59 – 125 (powers of search and seizure)  
Coughlan pp. 126-142 (powers of detention)  
Coughlan pp. 143-146 (power to “break the law”)

## **GETTING TO THE TRIAL: TAKING CONTROL OVER THE ACCUSED**

### **25. Securing Jurisdiction over the Accused and Interim Release**

The police have specified powers to arrest individuals. So too do non-police officers. The common theme in the relevant legal provisions is that arrest – taking physical control over the subject - is to be used as a last resort when other measures available for ensuring the good conduct and attendance before the criminal justice process are not practical or desirable. These less intrusive modes of securing attendance include the appearance notice, the promise to appear, and the summons. Where an individual is arrested, he or she must be released or given a bail hearing where it will be decided whether the individual should be released absolutely, subjected to conditions of release, or held in custody pending the trial.

Coughlan pp 50 – 53 (gaining jurisdiction over the accused)  
Coughlan pp.168 – 195 (the arrest)  
Coughlan pp. 153 – 161 (compelling appearance without arrest)  
Coughlan pp. 161 – 167 (the bail hearing)  
*R. v. Hall*, [2002] S.C.J. No. 65

## **GETTING READY FOR TRIAL**

### **26. Disclosure**

A key right of the accused, and an important obligation on the Crown is to make full disclosure of the fruits of the investigation (all information gathered by or made known to the police during the investigation) to the accused. All of the fruits of the investigation are to be disclosed save what is clearly irrelevant or privileged. The law of privilege is covered by the law of evidence but the most relevant privileges should be flagged here. Disclosure is to be made before the accused is called upon to elect his mode of trial for s.536 indictable offences.

The accused may also seek to secure relevant “third party records” – relevant documents that are not the fruits of the investigation that are under the control of persons other than prosecution and police. Where third party records are sought, complex applications must be brought, which differ depending on whether the charge is a sexual offence prosecution or some other offence.

If issues arise as to whether proper disclosure has been made, the assigned trial judge should ordinarily resolve them. As a practical matter, this requires early assignment of a trial judge who can address these matters.

*R. v. Stinchcombe*, [1991] 3 S.C.R. 326  
Coughlan pp.197 – 222

## **27. Preliminary Inquiries**

As indicated, at the preliminary inquiry, the judge must determine whether the Crown has presented a *prima facie* case. If so, the accused is committed to stand trial and the prosecutor will be called upon to draft an indictment, which will replace the original information as the new charging document. If the Crown does not establish a *prima facie* case, the accused is discharged and the prosecution on the charge that has been laid ends – in effect, the accused who was “charged” is “discharged.” A discharge at a preliminary inquiry is not, however, an acquittal. The prosecution can relay the charge and try again, but will not do so unless important new evidence is uncovered. The Attorney General also has the authority to lay a direct indictment, which gives jurisdiction to a court to try the accused. The direct indictment can be used to re-institute a prosecution after a preliminary inquiry discharge, or to bypass a preliminary inquiry altogether by indicting the accused directly to trial.

Coughlan pp. 224 - 249

## **28. The Jury Trial**

If a jury trial is to be held, a trial judge is assigned, and a jury is selected.

Coughlan pp. 54 – 58 (selecting mode of trial)  
Coughlan pp. 274 – 292 (jury selection)

## **29. Pre-Trial Motions**

In either judge alone or jury trials, there will often be preliminary legal issues to be resolved before the trial gets going. These will ordinarily be dealt with by the assigned trial judge. In a jury trial, it is often convenient to assign the judge and to dispose of these matters before a jury is selected, or if the motions can be resolved expeditiously, select the jury and require it to leave the courtroom until the motions are completed.

Coughlan pp.253 – 273

## **THE TRIAL VERDICT**

### **30. Jury Trials**

Where there has been a jury trial, the judge will “charge” the jury on the relevant law, and the jury will retire to deliberate, returning with a general verdict (i.e., a verdict delivered without reasons). If there is a conviction, the judge will conduct a sentencing hearing and impose sentence.

Coughlan pp.332 – 339

### **31. Judicial Verdicts**

Where there has been a judge alone trial, the judge will render the verdict. The judge is obliged to give reasons for decision. If the accused is convicted, the judge will conduct a sentencing hearing.

Coughlan pp. 370 - 372

### 32. Double Jeopardy and Issue Estoppel

Where a verdict has been rendered, the accused cannot be tried again for the same offence or for an offence based on the same factual allegations he has been acquitted or convicted of. Moreover, under the doctrine of issue estoppel the Crown is prevented from attempting in future proceedings from re-litigating factual issues that have already been decided against the Crown.

*R. v. Mahalingan*, [2008] S.C.J. No. 64

## SENTENCING

### 33. General Principles of Sentencing

For the most part, the general principles of sentencing have been codified in the *Criminal Code*.

CC sections 718, 718.01, 718.1, 718.2, 718.3, 719

*R. v. C.A.M.*, [1996] 1 S.C.R. 500

*R. v. Priest*, [1996] O.J. No. 3369

*R. v. Boucher*, [2004] O.J. No. 2689 (Ont. C.A.)

#### *Procedure*

CC sections 720, 721, 722, 723, 724

*R. v. Bremner*, [2000] B.C.J. No. 1096 (B.C.C.A.)

*R. v. Cromwell*, [2005] N.S.J. No. 428 (N.S.C.A.) (plea bargain and joint submission)

#### *Incarceration*

CC section 732, 743, 743.1, 745, 718.3(4)

#### *Conditional Sentence of Imprisonment*

CC section 742, 742.1, 742.3, 742.6, 742.7

*R. v. Proulx*, [2000] 1 S.C.R. 61 (NOTE - the range of offences eligible for conditional sentences has been altered since *R. v. Proulx* was decided, yet the principles continue to apply)

#### *Probation and Community Service*

CC section 731, 732.1, 732.2, 733.1

*R. v. Ziatas*, [1973] O.J. No. 726 (Ont. C.A.)

#### *Fines*

CC sections 734, 734.6, 734.7, 736 (note – there is no fine-option program in force in most provinces, including Ontario), 787

#### *Discharges*

CC section 730

*R. v. Fallofield* (1973), 13 C.C.C. (2d) 450 (B.C.C.A.)

***Recognizance Orders***

CC section 810, 810.1 and 810.11

*R. v. Budreo*, [2000] O.J. No. 72 (Ont. C.A.), leave to appeal to S.C.C. refused

***Restitution***

CC sections 738 – 741.2 inclusive

***Victim Surcharges***

CC section 737(1)

***Sentencing Aboriginal Offenders***

CC section 718.2(e)

*R v. Gladue*, [1999] 1 S.C.R. 688

***Punishment of Organizations***

CC sections 718.21, 735

***Parole***

CC sections 743.6, 745.2

*R. v. Zinck* [2003] S.C.J. No. 5

**APPEALS AND REVIEW****34. Appeals of Final Decisions and Judicial Review of Interim Decisions**

Final verdicts can be appealed. Interim decisions cannot be. Interim decisions can, however, be the subject of judicial review applications where jurisdictional errors occur. Judicial review may be necessary, for example, to challenge preliminary inquiry results, to seek or quash publication bans, or to suppress or access third party records; in these cases if we wait until the end of the trial, the damage sought to be prevented may have already occurred, hence the judicial review application. In the case of appeals, different grounds of appeal and procedural routes apply, depending on whether an offence has been prosecuted summarily or indictably.

Coughlan, pp. 351 – 370; 372 – 375 (appeals)

Coughlan, pp. 247 – 249 (judicial review, exemplified in the context of preliminary inquiries)

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[www.canlii.org](http://www.canlii.org)

This is a listing for all the provinces and is highly recommended

Ontario:

<http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/legis/>

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<http://www.bclaws.ca/>

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<http://www.qp.alberta.ca/>

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