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# News Release

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## MINISTER OF JUSTICE RESPONDS TO STANDING COMMITTEE'S REPORT ON CRIME CARDS AND BOARD GAMES

OTTAWA, April 20, 1995 -- The Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Allan Rock, yesterday deposited with the Clerk of the House the government's response to the Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs (Crime Cards and Board Games).

On April 27, 1994, the Minister of Justice referred draft legislation dealing with serial killer cards and board games to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs for review.

The Standing Committee tabled its report on November 16, 1994. The Committee found that although serial killer cards and crime board games do not have a pervasive presence in the Canadian entertainment market, such products are distasteful in the extreme, in violation of community standards and have no redeeming social value. The Committee, however, recommended against legislation to deal specifically with crime cards and board games, as these represent "only the tip of the iceberg." Instead, it recommended that the obscenity provisions of the *Criminal Code* and *Customs Tariff* be amended to prohibit materials that have, as a dominant characteristic, "the undue exploitation of horror, cruelty or violence."

The Minister commended the Committee for having taken an important first step in identifying the need to examine violence in entertainment and the media, and its potential impact on Canadian society, in particular on young people.

"As a result of the Committee's well-reasoned and thoughtful analysis of the exploitation of violence in Canadian society," said the Minister, "I am persuaded that this issue deserves serious review."

The Minister agreed with the Committee's finding that a piecemeal approach to addressing the glorification of crime and violence by prohibiting certain cards and board games would not tackle the underlying problem.

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In response to the Committee's report, the Minister asserted that he will examine possible amendments to the obscenity provisions of the *Criminal Code* as recommended by the Committee. At the same time, however, it was acknowledged that any such amendment would only address the most graphic and extreme expressions of violence in the media and in the entertainment and advertising industries. "I believe that we should enlarge our strategy in order to examine other legislative and non-legislative options," stated Minister Rock.

The strategy proposed by the Minister includes the release of a discussion paper to interested groups and individuals in late summer, 1995. The discussion paper will canvass the voluntary and legislative steps that could be taken to deal with the undue exploitation of violence. Further, the consultation will examine the voluntary measures now being taken by members of the broadcasting industry, public interest groups and communities to determine whether more needs to be done. Minister Rock will invite other Ministers and departments directly concerned with violence in society to participate in this effort and hopes that by March 1996, the Government will be in a position to decide whether further legislative and non-legislative steps should be taken.

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Note to editors: Letter attached