

Remarks by Bill Crate

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Canadian Bankers Association

for

Vancouver Police Department Media Briefing
on Bank Robberies

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Vancouver, British Columbia

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY



CANADIAN BANKERS ASSOCIATION

Thank you Deputy Chief LePard. My name is Bill Crate and I am Director of Security at the Canadian Bankers Association. On behalf of our member banks operating here in British Columbia, I would like to thank the Vancouver Police Department for inviting us to be here today.

Everyone in this room recognizes that bank robbery is a serious issue facing not only banks and the police in this city, but all businesses and residents of the Greater Vancouver Area.

The banking industry commends the Vancouver Police Department, particularly Sergeant Les Yeo and his Robbery Unit, for their hard work in apprehending suspected bank robbers and getting them off the streets. The police truly have done a phenomenal job and we congratulate them for these efforts.

The success that Vancouver Police have had delivers a very clear message to potential criminals: if you rob a bank, you won't get away with it. Ultimately that is a strong deterrent and goes a long way to ensuring that bank branches remain safe for our customers and staff.

The CBA and the range of stakeholders involved in this important matter recognize that the robbery problem in BC is complex. While there are no quick fixes, it is clear that government, law enforcement, Crown Prosecutors, the courts, Corrections and our industry need to work together to achieve a consistent, balanced and effective approach to the robbery problem. For our part, the banks have security measures in place and have heightened their efforts to help prevent bank robberies in Vancouver because we know we also have an important role to play, and we take that role seriously.

I would also like to acknowledge the Government of British Columbia and their recent commitment to a comprehensive review of sentencing practices and addressing the problems of drug abuse and chronic repeat offenders. In the past, bank robbers in Vancouver have been given lighter sentences and are more likely to be substance abusers and repeat offenders than in some other Canadian cities. We believe that these factors have contributed to the higher robbery rates in this city, and that trend needs to be reversed.

The efforts of the banks, the police and government are all important because it is not about the money stolen. Rather, it is about the people on the receiving end of a robbery threat – our branch staff and customers. Robberies are unpredictable situations that have the potential to put the public and employees in harm's way. That is why fighting bank robberies in Vancouver is our industry's number one priority in British Columbia.

The Canadian banking industry has a long history of working with police to fight financial crime, and that strong, cooperative and supportive relationship continues to this day. We commend our colleagues from the Vancouver Police Department for their dedication and we will continue to work closely with them, and our other partners, to deter robberies in Vancouver.

Thank you.