



## Justice officials in war of words over crime laws

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A nasty war of words erupted yesterday between the two most powerful elected justice officials in Canada.

In duelling two-page letters, federal Justice Minister Rob Nicholson and Ontario Attorney General Chris Bentley lashed out at one another over anti-crime legislation.

Nicholson fired the first salvo with "an open letter" sent at 9 a.m. blasting Bentley for criticizing Ottawa in the Legislature on Monday for failing to do more to prevent criminals from getting out on bail.

"I am deeply concerned about the misleading comments made by you (Monday) ... regarding the safety and security of Ontarians," complained the federal minister.

After the weekend's deadly Queen St. E. shooting of bystander Bailey Zaveda, the attorney general had blamed federal inaction on everything from gun control to bail provisions.

"The Criminal Code is federal jurisdiction. It's time he picked up the phone and called his friend (Prime Minister Stephen) Harper," Bentley told the House on Monday under questioning from Progressive Conservative MPP Bob Runciman (Leeds-Grenville).

"When we called for tougher bail laws, he scoffed. When we called for Harper to put in the non-commission recommendations on young offenders, he scoffed. Call your chum and do something about it," Bentley told Runciman.

Nicholson sent off his two-page missive to remind Bentley that the federal Tories had "enacted mandatory minimum prison terms for serious firearms offences under the Tackling Violent Crime Act."