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CRIME TRENDS IN CANADA

1966 - 1973

STATISTICS COORDINATION SECTION
RESEARCH AND SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT BRANCH
MINISTRY OF THE SOLICITOR GENERAL

OCTOBER, 1974

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CRIME TRENDS IN CANADA, 1966 - 1973

INTRODUCTION

This informal study examines the fluctuations in certain selected offence classifications reported by police agencies in Canada to Statistics Canada under the Uniform Crime Reporting System (U.C.R.) during the calendar years 1966 - 1973, inclusive.

The Crime Index offences have been selected as a measuring device because, as a group, they reflect the most common criminal occurrences. The offences are all considered to be serious either due to the nature of the crime or by its volume. They do not, in themselves, represent the totality of reported crime; rather the Crime Index contains only nine of the twenty-five U.C.R. offence classifications reported during the time period involved. The Index Offences are among the most regularly reported and therefore, the most meaningful for trend studies.

Reported crime does not necessarily reflect the total incidence of crime as many criminal actions are not discovered and not all offences are reported to official sources. Though reporting practices vary between police agencies with regard to the extent that they report offences, the crime counts used in the Crime Index are based on actual offences established by police investigation.

The Offence classifications included in the Crime Index to study crime trends in Canada have been selected to enable comparison with the Crime Index offences reported under the F.B.I. Uniform Crime Reporting System in the United States. The four index offences reflecting the incidence of violent crime consist of murder, forcible rape, aggravated assault and robbery, while offences against property are reflected by three index offences: burglary, larceny - theft, and auto theft. A table of concordance between the U.S.A. and Canadian U.C.R. offence types included in the Index is located in Appendix One. The U.S. nomenclature is adopted for this study.

The sources of data for the study are also contained in Appendix One.

The present study has been undertaken by the Statistics Coordination Section, Ministry of the Solicitor General, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0P8, Canada.

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ANALYSIS

Table One - Crime Index Trends (Percent Change Between Consecutive Years, 1966-1973) - Canada & USA Compared.

This table shows the percentage increase or decrease in the incidence of reported index offences between consecutive years. For example, in Canada there was a 14% increase in reported Robbery offences in 1970 over 1969, and a 12 % overall increase in the four violent crime indices. When all seven crime index offences are considered as a total, a 13% increase is recorded.

The equivalent changes are also indicated for the United States.

Crime in Canada, as measured by the Crime Index offences, has increased steadily from one year to the next from 1966 to 1971, for offences against the person and against property. A minor exception is a 2 % decrease in reported Robbery offences in 1971 over 1970. A comparable overall, though lesser, increase is apparent in the United States for the same period.

The percentage change for 1972/71 Total Crime Index reveals a decrease of 7% over the previous year. This seems to reflect the overall decrease in the Property Crime Indices of 7 % (noting the exception of "Auto Theft" which increased 3 % between 1971 and 1972), as well as the stabilizing trend revealed in a 1 % increase for the Total Violent Crime Index. Though a decrease of 19 % is recorded for the Total Crime Index, 1973/72, the legislative change in the offence category "Larceny \$50 and Over" must be considered when comparing the figures with previous years.

Charts 1-10 enable closer inspection of the Canadian crime trends apparent.

Charts 1 - 3: Crime Index Trends Cumulative and Over Previous Year, Canada - Total Crime Index Offences.

Charts 1 and 3 representing Total Crime Index Offences and Total Property Crime Index Offences, respectively, demonstrate parallel trends over the seven year period. An unremitting cumulative percentage increase is apparent in the incidence of the reported index offences from 1967 until 1971 at which time the percent change (Cumulative and Over Previous Year) decreases 26% over the two year period 1971 to 1973. Charts 1 and 3 include a representation of "Cumulative" and "Over Previous Year" percentage change trends excluding the figures for the offence category "Larceny \$50.00 and Over", for reasons noted in footnote (4) of Table 1.

Chart 2 depicting Total Violent Crime Index Offences reveals a similar percentage increase during the five year period from 1967 until 1971 at which time the rate stabilizes, indicating no change between 1971 and 1972. However, in contrast with Charts 1 and 3, there is an 11% increase in the Total Violent Crime Index Offences (Cumulative and Over Previous Year), between 1972 and 1973.

Charts 4 - 7: Crime Index Trends, Cumulative and Over Previous Year, Canada - Violent Crime Index Offences

The four graphs indicate percentage change trends for each of the four offence classifications that comprise the violent crime index. Generally, a steady increase is apparent in the cumulative percentage change during the period 1967 - 1970, at which time trends vary for each particular offence.

ANALYSIS (continued)

Murder: Chart 4 reveals a steady percentage increase in the incidence of reported offences over the seven year period of 37%. A distinct pattern is apparent with plateaux (i.e. no percentage change between two consecutive years) occurring at two-year intervals separated by percentage change increases. The percentage change in 1973 over 1966 is 60.0%. Erratic fluctuations tend to occur for the percentage change between consecutive years, however, this is essentially due to the relatively small absolute numbers of murder offences reported (i.e. 519 offences in 1972, and 540 offences in 1973).

Forcible Rape: The trend apparent in chart 5 is one of a steady cumulative percentage increase over the seven year period. The graph levels off in 1971 where the percentage increase for 1972 over 1971 is 2%, this is followed by a sharp increase of 22% in 1973 over the 1972 rate. The percentage change in 1973 over 1966 is 84.6%. Again, it is important to remember, as with the murder offence classification, that the absolute numbers involved for the reported offence of Forcible Rape are relatively small when compared with the other Index Offence classifications.

Robbery: Chart 6 reveals a steady increase in the cumulative percentage change, with the exception of a 2% increase in 1971 over 1970. This slight decline in the rate of incidence is followed by cumulative percentage increase during 1972 and 1973. The percentage change in 1973 over 1966 is 76.3%.

Aggravated Assault: Chart 7 indicates a continued percentage increase from 1967 until 1971. When the rate of incidence of aggravated assault for 1972 is compared with the rate for 1971, a decrease of 4% is revealed. However, this trend is followed by percentage increase of 10% in 1973. The percentage change in 1973 over 1966 is 64.6%.

Charts 8 - 10: Crime Index Trends, Cumulative and Over Previous Year, Canada - Property Crime Index Offences.

The three offence classifications detailed all show steady cumulative percentage increases over the five year time period 1966 - 1971, the greatest reported increase occurring for the offence category "Larceny \$50.00 and Over" which increased 71% in 1971 over 1966.

Burglary: Chart 8 indicates a steady cumulative percentage increase from 1966 until 1971 with a slight decrease from year to year percentage increase of offences reported over each of the previous years. During 1972 and 1973, the increase stabilizes with a decrease of 2% in 1972 over 1971 and a 2% increase in 1973 over 1972. The percentage change in 1973 over 1966 is 48.2%.

Larceny \$50.00 and Over: Chart 9 indicates a cumulative percentage increase of 84% in 1971 over 1966. In 1972 and 1973, the rate of incidence decreases rapidly (-16.4% in 1972 over 1971, and -57.6% in 1973 over 1972.). However, caution should be employed when attempting to identify a trend from figures available for 1972 and 1973, (See Table One; footnote (4)). The percentage change in 1973 over 1966 is -36.1%.

Auto Theft: Chart 10 appears to follow the same general trend as for the offence "Burglary"; with a continued cumulative percentage increase over the seven year period, accompanied by a diminishing percentage increase between successive years, to the extent that no percentage increase is recorded for 1973 rates over 1972 rates. The percentage change in 1973 over 1966 is 38.0%.

ANALYSIS (continued)

Table Two - Canadian Crime Indices, Rate and Percent Change 1973/72, and 1972/71.

This table examines the number of Crime Index offences reported and their rate per 100,000 total population to determine the percentage change of each in 1973 over 1972 and 1972 over 1971.

To exemplify the logic of the table, in 1973, there were 13,166 robberies reported, or 59.6 robberies per 100,000 of the total population. In 1972, there were 11,832 such offences reported, or 54.2 offences per 100,000 population. Accordingly, in 1973 there was an increase of 11.3 % in the actual number of reported robberies when compared with 1972 figures, and a corresponding increase of 10.0 % in the rate per 100,000 total population. Comparison of 1972 and 1971 rates for the same offence reveals an increase of 2.4 % in the actual number of offences 1972 over 1971, and an increase of 1.7 % in the rate per 100,000 total population.

For the Total Crime Index, there was a 6.0 % decrease in the actual number of reported offences in 1972 over 1971, followed by a further decrease of 17.8% in 1973 over 1972. Corresponding decreases are reflected in percentage change for rates of 6.6 % for 1972/71 and 18.8 % for 1973/72. Again, the caveat concerning the change in legislation of the "Theft Over" category and the resulting effects upon the offence classification of "Larceny \$50.00 and Over" is raised when interpreting those categories containing Larceny figures (i.e. Total Crime Index; Total Property Crimes; etc.).

TABLE ONE: CRIME INDEX TRENDS (PERCENT CHANGE BETWEEN CONSECUTIVE YEARS , 1966-1973) - CANADA⁽¹⁾ & U.S.A.⁽²⁾ COMPARED⁽³⁾

YEARS	COUNTRY	TOTAL CRIME INDEX	VIOLENT CRIME INDICES					PROPERTY CRIME INDICES			
			Total	Murder	Forcible Rape	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Total	Burglary	Larceny \$50 and Over	Auto Theft
1967/66	CANADA	+13	+20	+42	+15	+24	+4	+13	+15	+12	+11
		+16	+15	+16	+8	+27	+8	+16	+16	+16	+17
1968/67	CANADA	+16	+16	+6	+13	+14	+25	+16	+19	+12	+11
		+17	+19	+14	+15	+30	+11	+17	+19	+21	+18
1969/68	CANADA	+14	+18	0	+11	+18	+24	+14	+10	+19	+13
		+11	+11	+7	+16	+13	+8	+11	+6	+21	+12
1970/69	CANADA	+13	+12	+22	+6	+14	+1	+13	+8	+23	+10
		+11	+12	+8	+2	+17	+7	+10	+10	+14	+5
1971/70	CANADA	+10	+1	0	+13	-2	+13	+11	+7	+17	+10
		+6	+9	+10	+9	+10	+8	+6	+8	+5	+1
1972/71	CANADA	-7	+1	+9	+2	+2	-4	-7	-2	-16	+3
		-3	+1	+4	+11	-4	+6	-3	-2	-3	-7
1973/72	CANADA	-19(5)	+11	0	+22	+10	+10	-20(5)	+2	-58(4)	0
		+5	+4	+5	+9	+1	+6	+5	+7	+4	+4

(1) Derived from Statistics Canada Catalogue No. 85 - 205 Annual Publications of Crime Statistics.

(2) Derived from F.B.I. Uniform Crime Reports for the United States, Annual Publications.

(3) Percent change for both Canada and U.S.A. are based upon actual offences and rates are calculated for 100,000 total population.

(4) In July, 1972, the Canadian Criminal Code, Section 294(a) was amended from "Theft Over \$50" to "Theft Over \$200". As the change came during the middle of the reporting year 1972, Statistics Canada did not change the reporting category until 1973, thus the figures for 1972 reflect the offence "Theft Over \$50". In the column Larceny \$50 and Over; the 1973 Canadian figures represent the offence category of "Theft Over \$200", while previous Canadian figures represent "Theft Over \$50". The 1973 figures indicate a substantial decrease in the rate for the offence category "Theft Over \$200" when compared with 1972 figures (-58), mainly resulting from the change in legislation which increased the value of goods stolen from \$50.00 to \$200. The decrease in Theft Over \$200 was offset by a substantial increase in Theft Under \$200 (for 1973/72 the percentage change in rate was +30).

(5) When 1973 figures for "Theft Over \$200" are omitted, the total crime index percent change for 1973/72 is +2 as compared to the -19 when "Theft Over \$200" is included. Similarly, the total property crime index changes from -20 to +2 when the figures for "Theft Over \$200" are omitted. Obviously caution should be employed when utilizing crime index figures for the category "Larceny \$50 and Over".

CHART 1

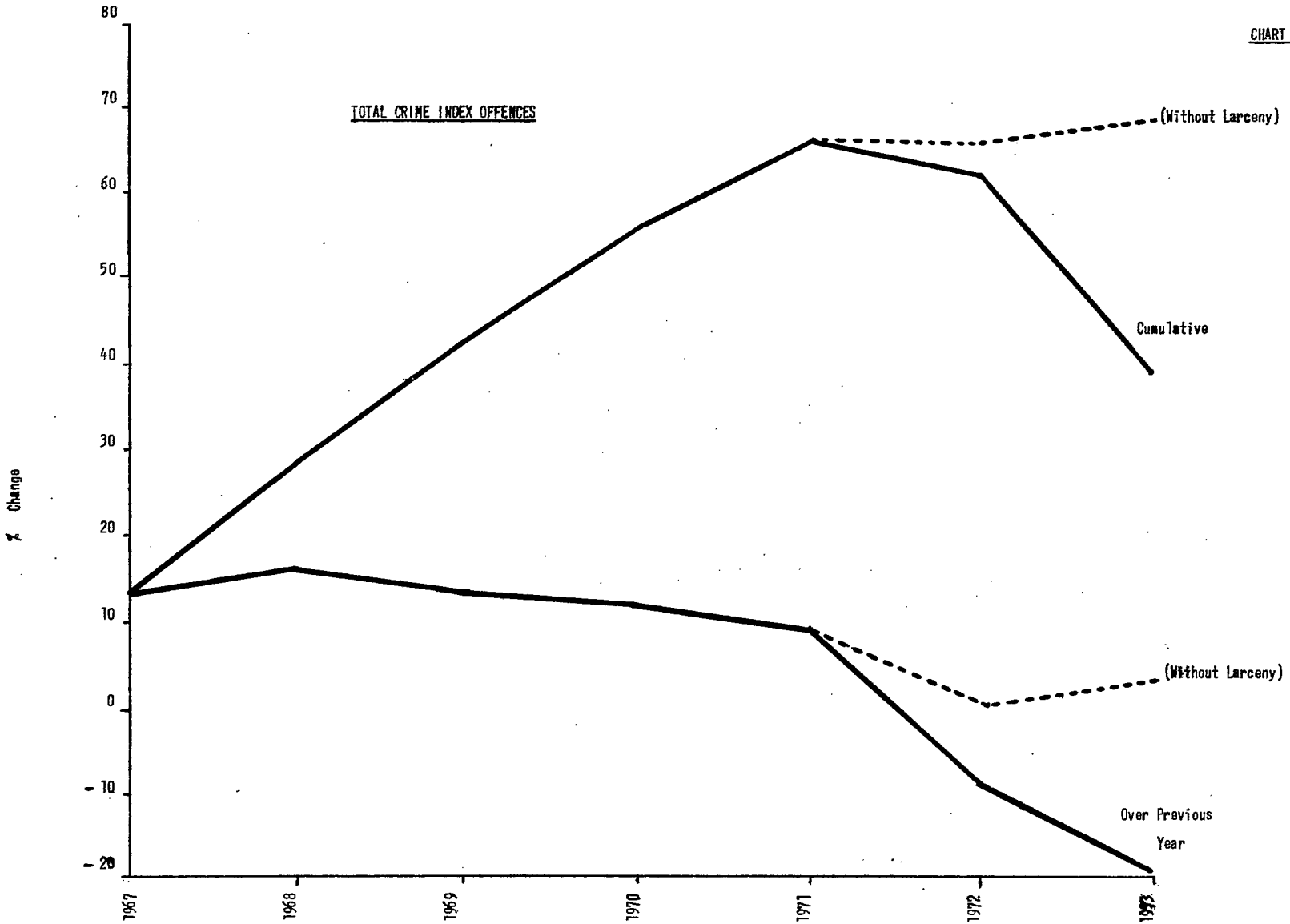


CHART 2

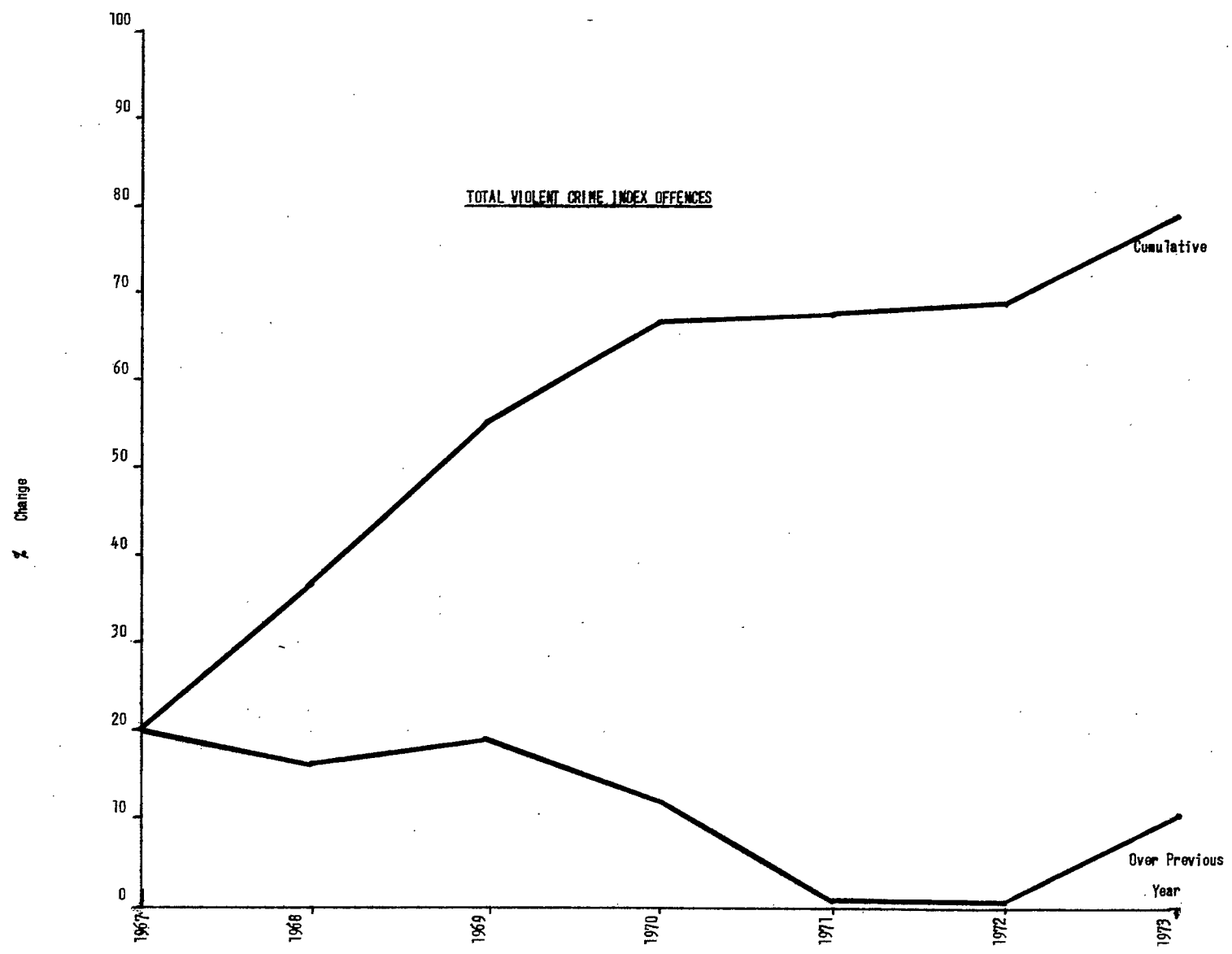


CHART 3

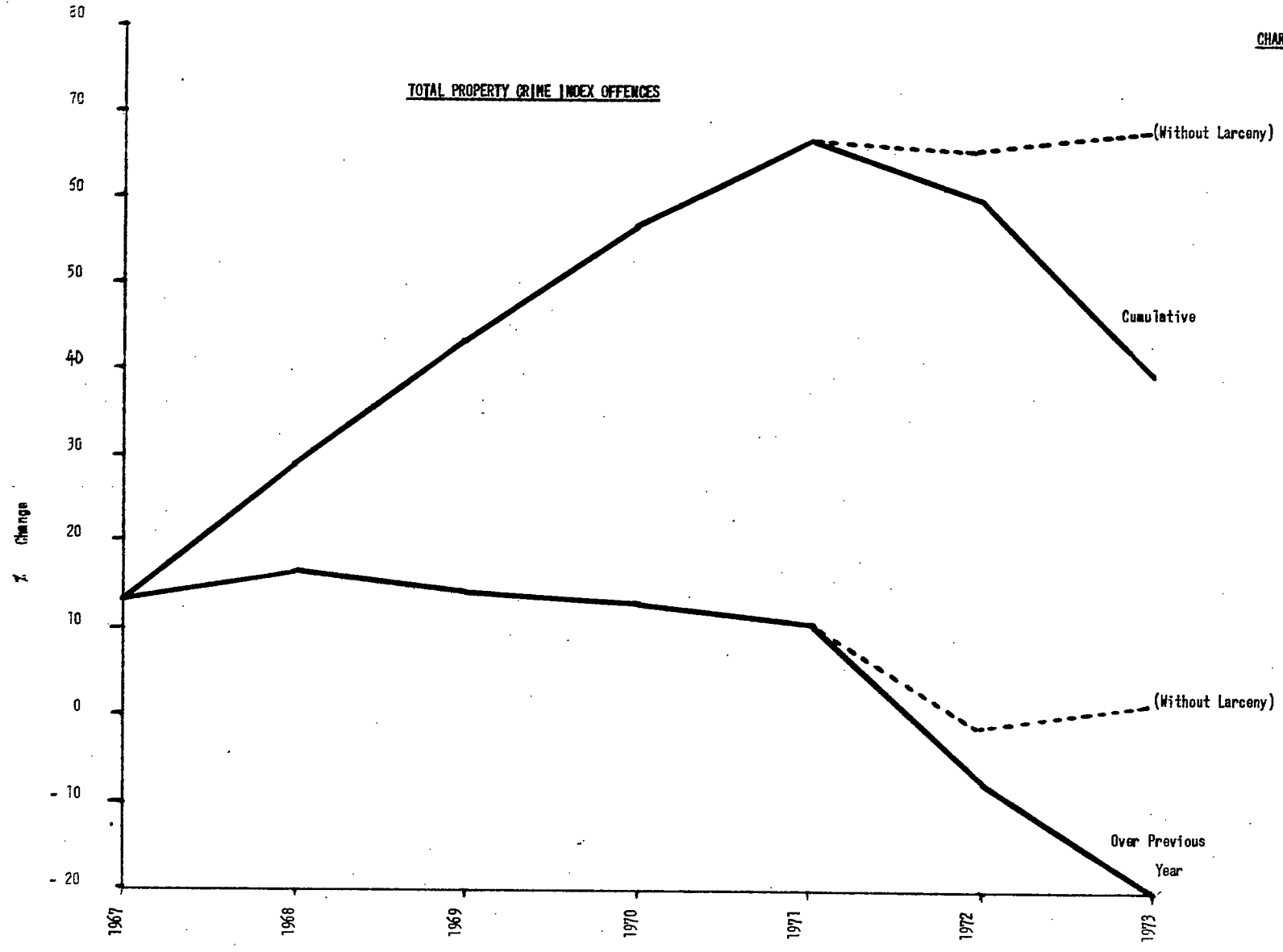


CHART 4

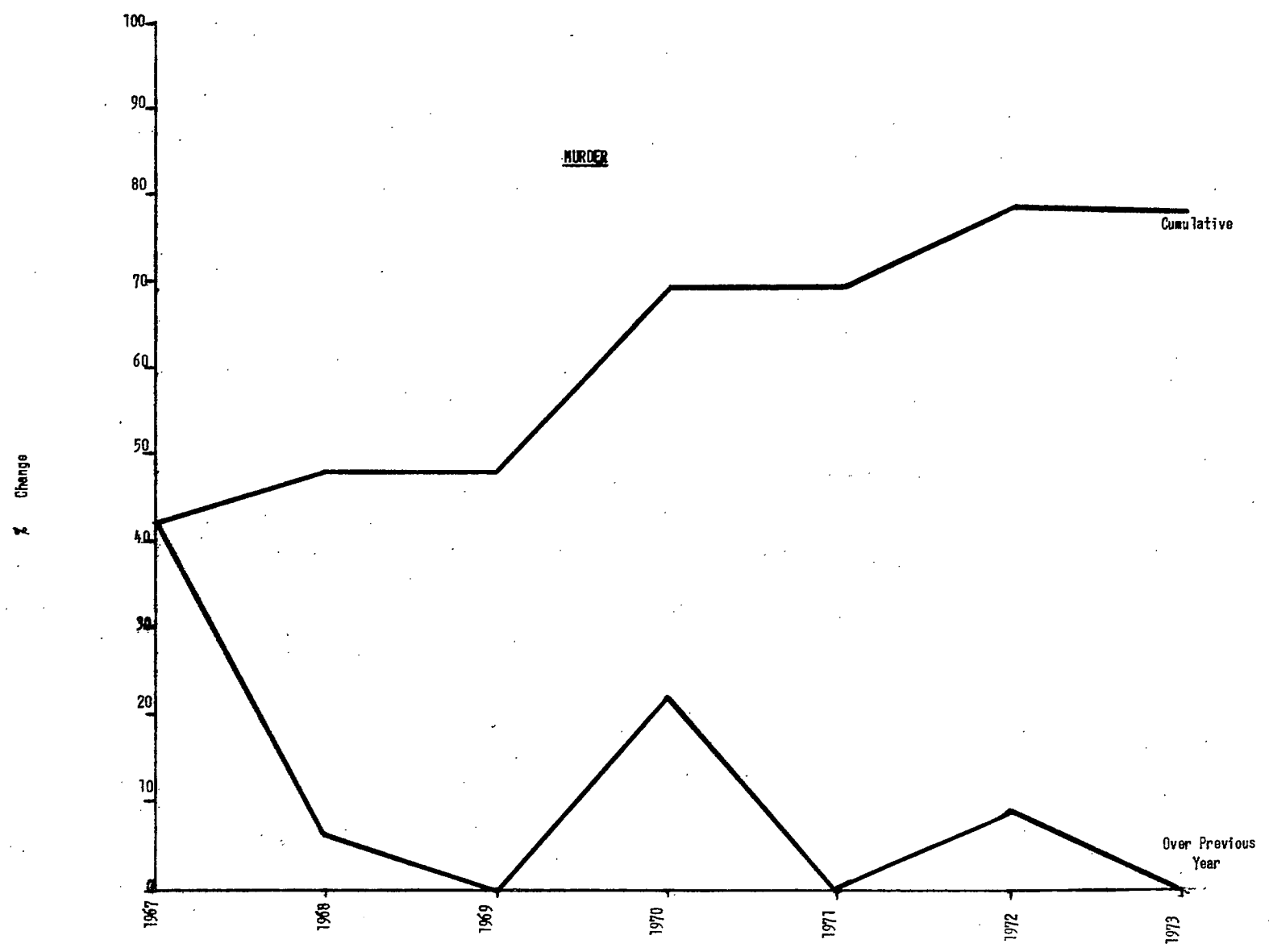


CHART 5

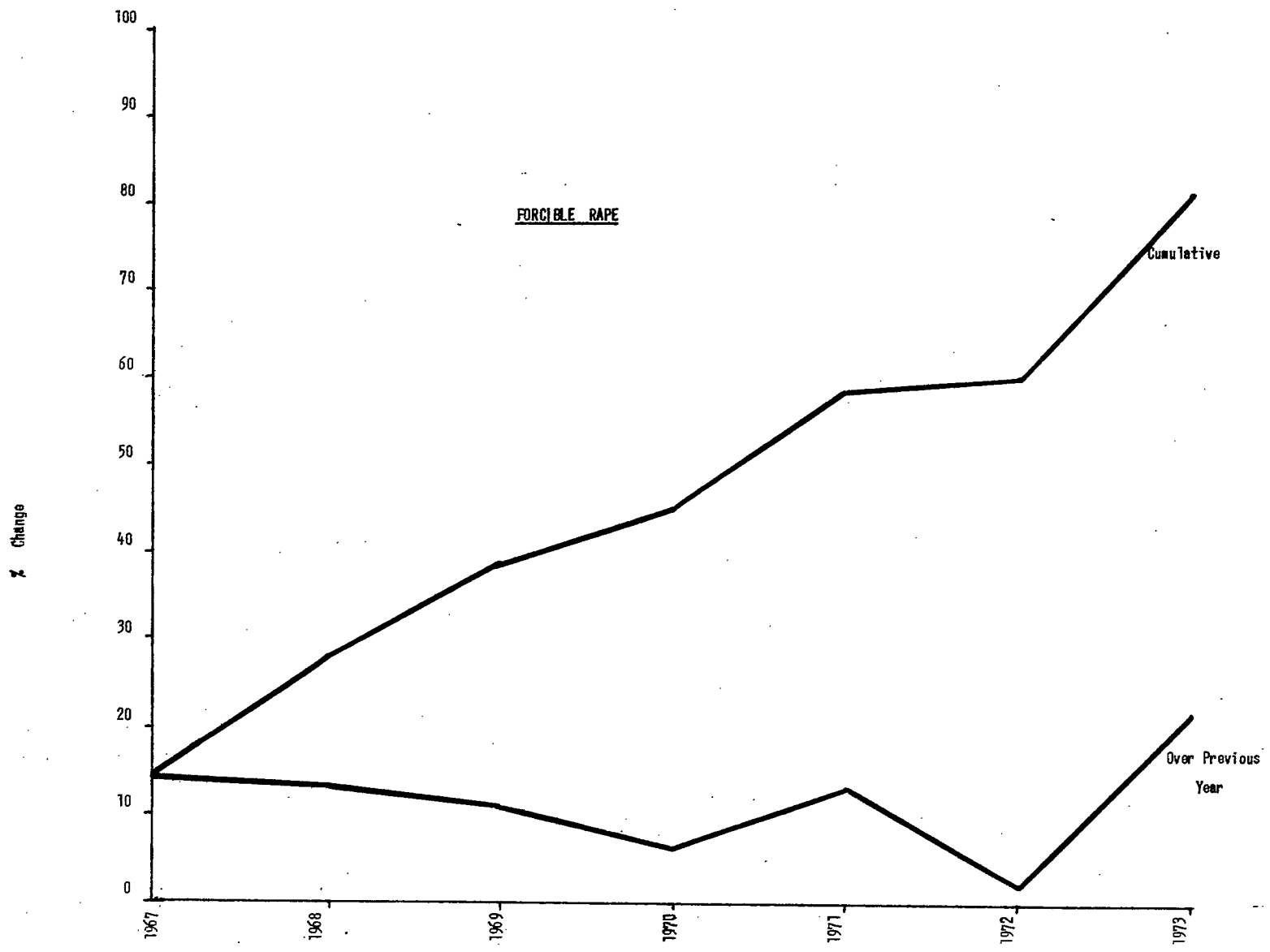


CHART 6

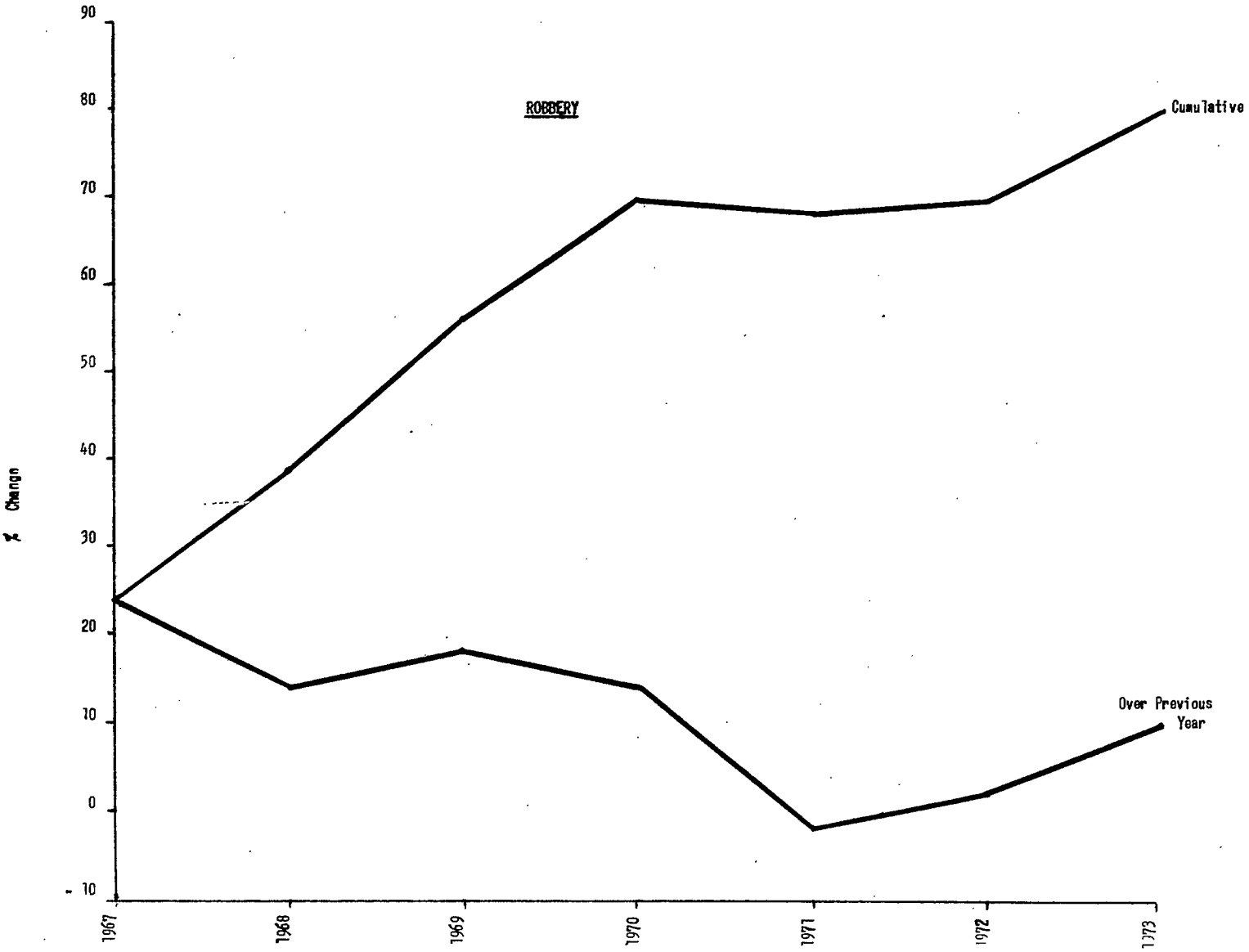
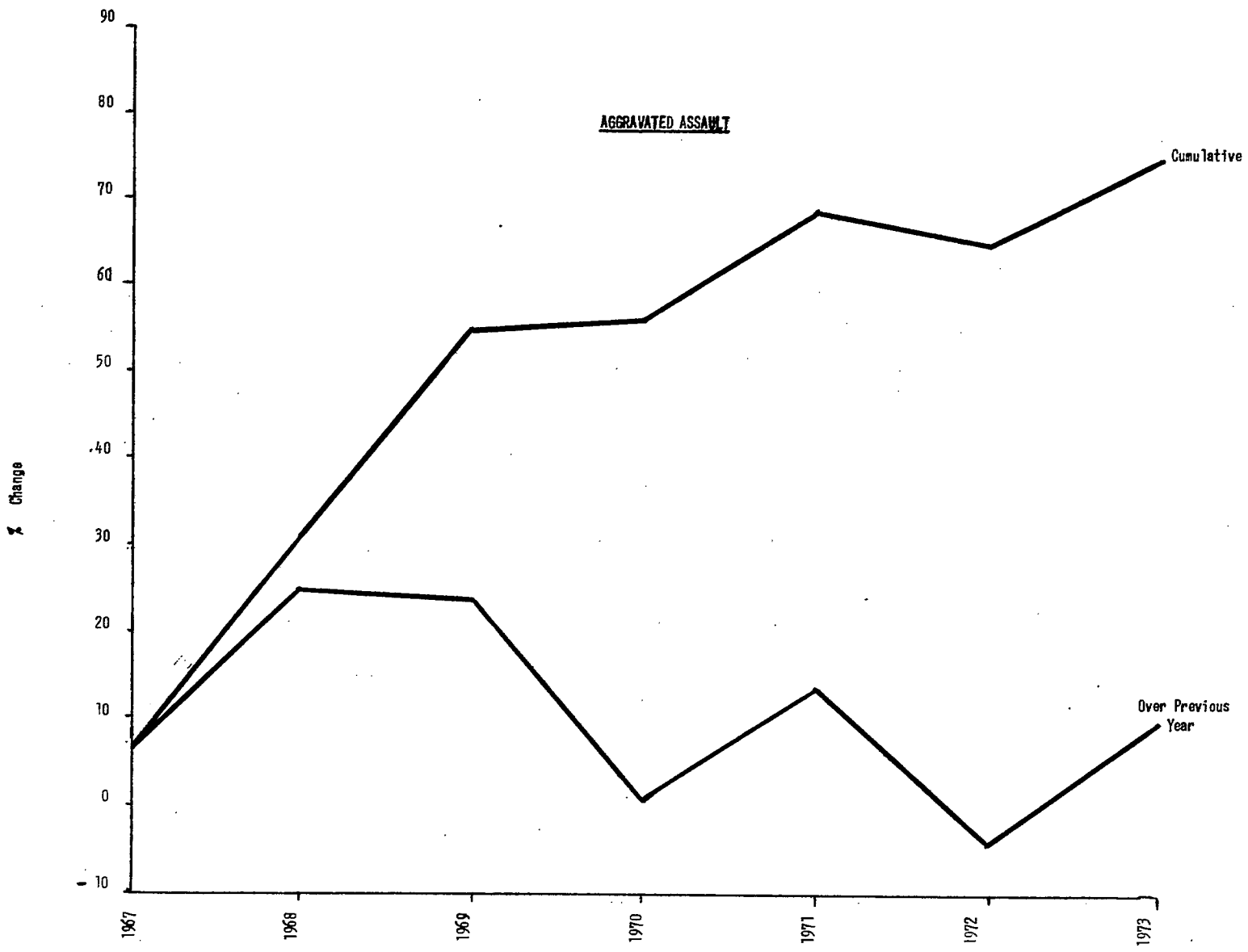


CHART 7



BURGLARY

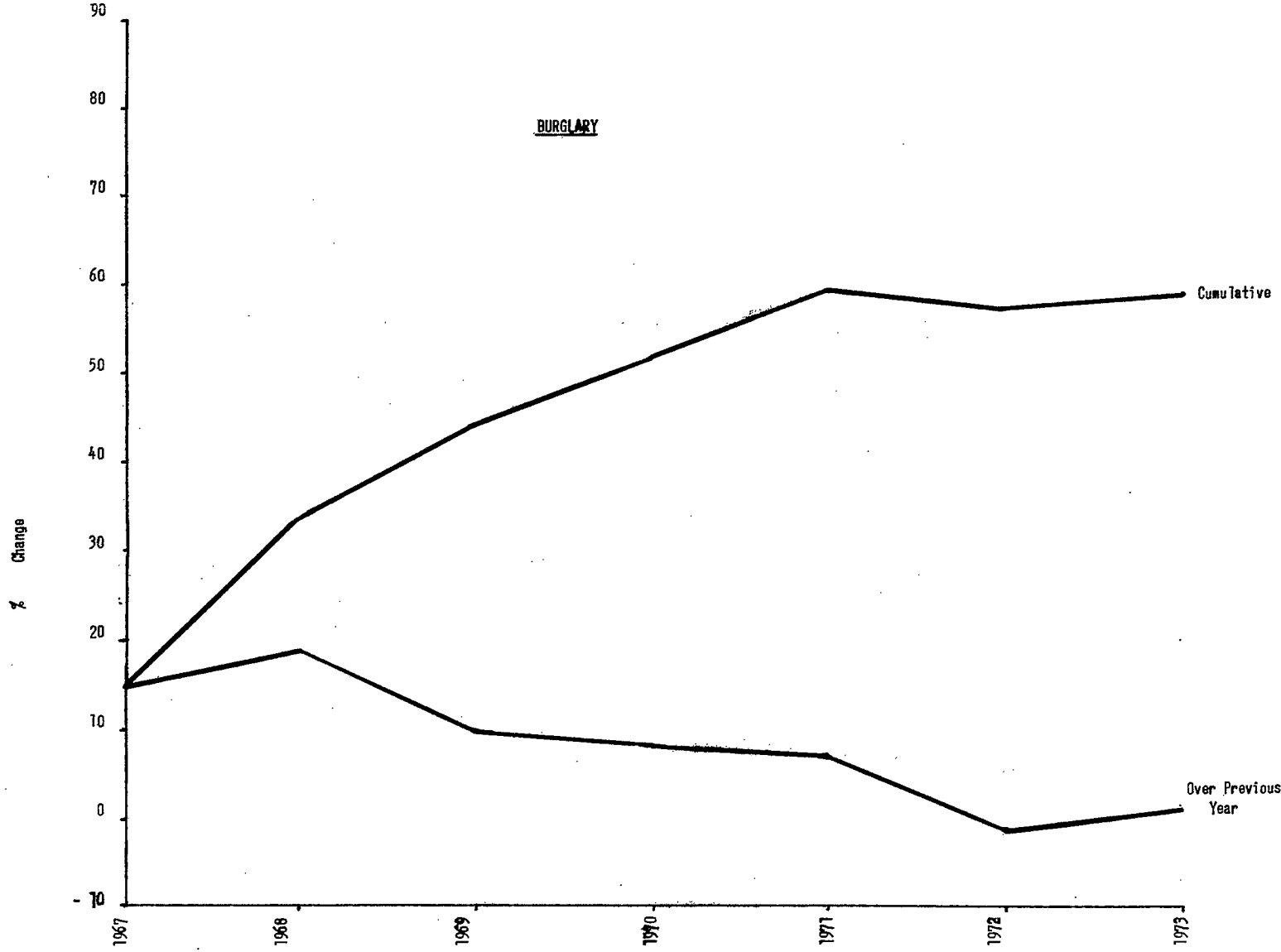


CHART 9

LARCENY \$ 50.00 AND OVER
(Refer to Table One, footnote (4))

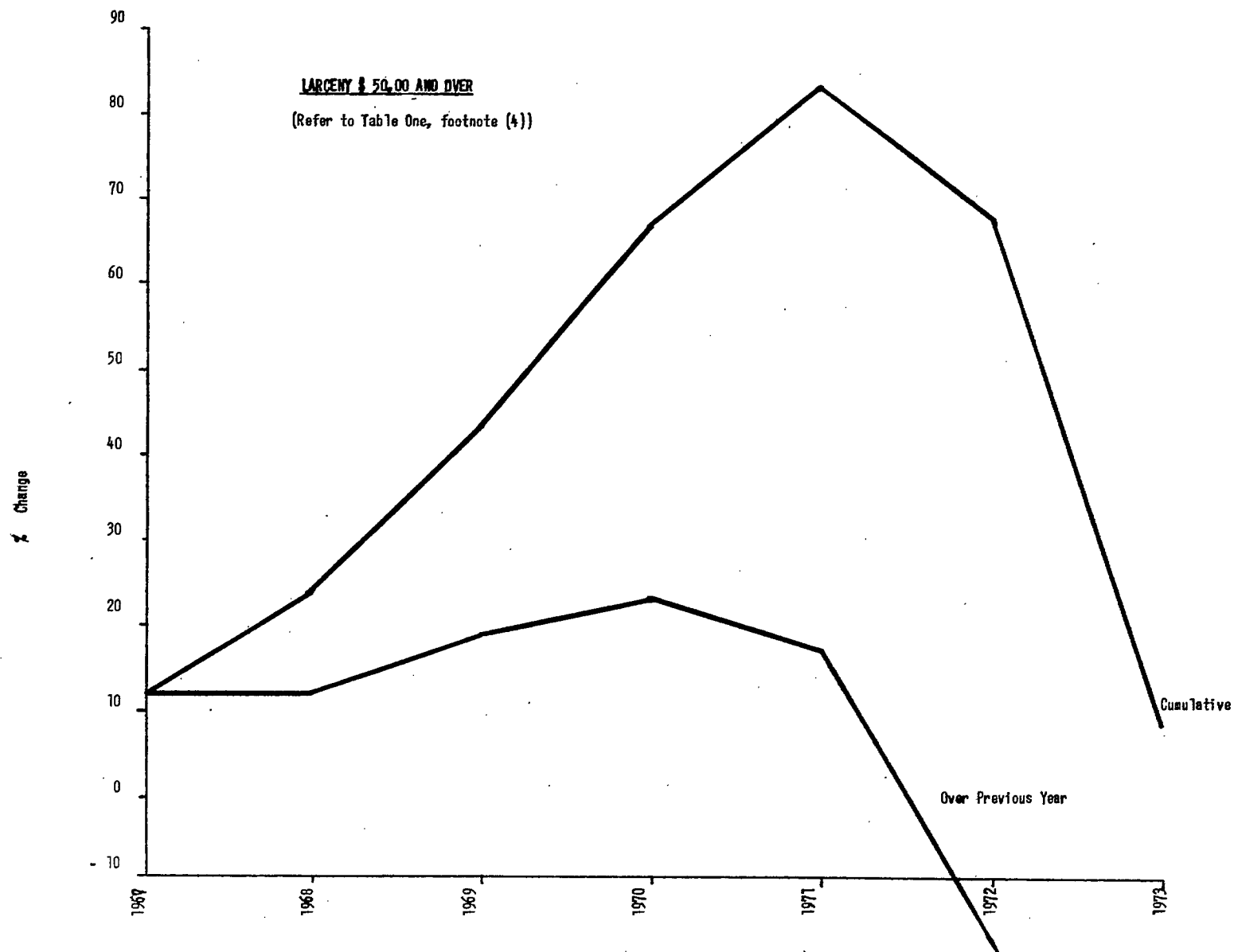


CHART 10

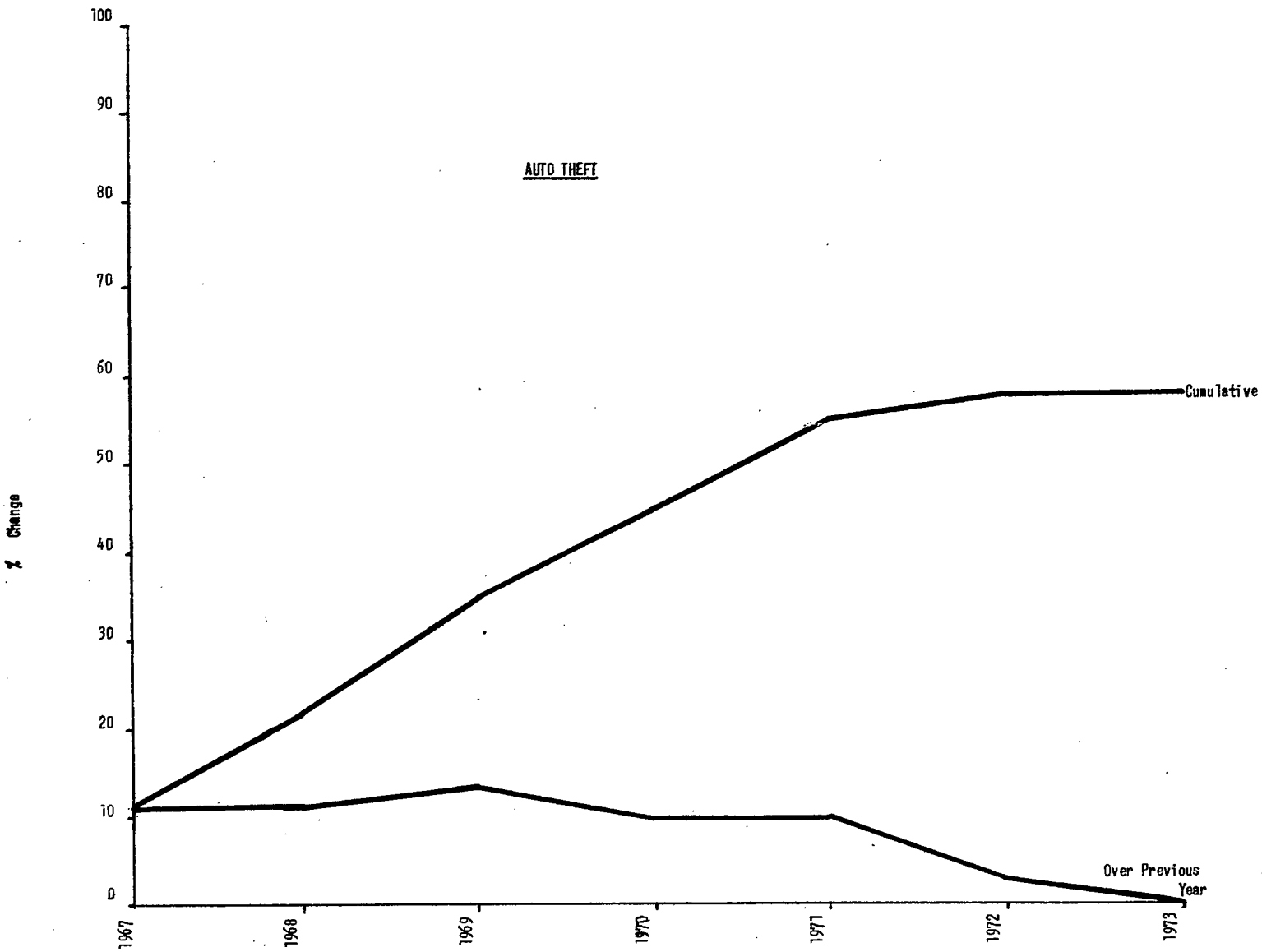


TABLE TWO: CANADIAN CRIME INDICES, RATE AND PERCENT CHANGE 1973/72, AND 1972/71. (1)

CRIME INDEX OFFENCES	REPORTED CRIME 1973		1972				1971			
	No.	Rate	Actual Offences		% Change in 1973		Actual Offences		% Change in 1972	
			No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate
TOTAL CRIME INDEX	350,677	1587.1	426,432	1954.3	-17.8	-18.8	453,810	2,093.1	-6.0	-6.6
VIOLENT CRIMES										
-Total	17,664	79.9	15,751	72.2	+12.1	+10.7	15,464	71.3	+1.9	+1.3
-Murder	540	2.4	519	2.4	+4.0	0	469	2.2	+10.7	+9.1
-Forcible Rape	1,593	7.2	1,285	5.9	+24.0	+22.0	1,249	5.8	+2.9	+1.7
-Robbery	13,166	59.6	11,832	54.2	+11.3	+10.0	11,551	53.3	+2.4	+1.7
-Aggravated Assault	2,365	10.7	2,115	9.7	+11.8	+10.3	2,195	10.1	-3.7	-4.0
PROPERTY CRIMES										
-Total	333,013	1507.2	410,681	1882.1	-18.9	-19.9	438,346	2,021.8	-6.3	-6.9
-Burglary	198,040	896.3	190,939	875.0	+3.7	+2.4	192,748	889.0	-0.9	-1.6
-Larceny \$50. & Over	63,382	286.9	149,356	684.5	-57.6	-58.1	177,491	818.6	-15.9	-16.4
-Auto Theft	71,591	324.0	70,386	322.6	+1.7	+0.4	68,107	314.1	+3.3	+2.7

(1) The numbers and rates for the two categories 'Total Crime Index and Total Property Crimes' require the same caveat as presented in Table One, footnotes (4) and (5). The percentage change in rate for 1973/72 for Total Crime Index is -18.8, as indicated in the table; however, when the category "Larceny \$50 and Over" is excluded, the percentage change in rate becomes 2.3. Similarly, for the Total Property Crimes, the percentage change in rate 1973/72, becomes 1.8 when Larceny is omitted, compared to the -19.9 shown in the table when Larceny is included.

Source: Statistics Canada Catalogue No 85 - 205

APPENDIX ONE

TABLE OF CONCORDANCE

Index Offences Reported to Uniform Crime Reports (UCR)

A. VIOLENT CRIMES

Federal Bureau of Investigation UCR

1. Murder and Non-negligent Manslaughter
2. Forcible Rape
3. Robbery
4. Aggravated Assault

Statistics Canada UCR
(Number of Actual Offences)

- Murder
- Manslaughter
- Rape
- Robbery
- Wounding
- Attempted Murder

B. PROPERTY CRIMES

Federal Bureau of Investigation UCR

5. Burglary
6. Larceny \$50.00 and over
7. Auto Theft

Statistics Canada UCR
(Number of Actual Offences)

- Breaking and Entering
- Theft over \$50.00 (1966-72)
- Theft over \$200.00 (1973)
- Theft - Motor Vehicle

DATA SOURCES

The sources of data for this study are as follows:

Offence data: Canada - 1966-1973 Statistics Canada, Catalogue 85-205 Crime Statistics (Police)

United States - 1966-1973 F.B.I., Crime in the United States, Uniform Crime Reports

Population data: Judicial Division, Statistics Canada.

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