

The Committee believes that the responsibility for public education about television violence cannot be placed entirely on the provinces. Since the federal government has a responsibility under the Constitution for matters related to television broadcasting, it too should play an active role in promoting television literacy. In particular, it should encourage the development of industry and federal initiatives that use the television itself to make viewers television literate. Public service announcements (PSAs) are one approach with tremendous creative potential. Imagine the impact of the following scenario, outlined in a recent report on the effects of media violence on children:

Having actors associated with violent roles stress the fact that their characters are fictitious rather than real and disavow their violent actions in short spots [during or] following programs [to] help children place what they have seen in a more realistic perspective and limit how much they identify with violent characters.¹²⁴

With respect to PSA projects, the Committee notes that the Canadian Association of Broadcasters has made violence the subject of a \$10 million public service announcement campaign for 1993.¹²⁵ The CAB told the Committee that it is working with the Department of Communications and other government departments to make this PSA campaign a reality.¹²⁶ The Committee applauds this initiative and the private-public sector collaboration.

RECOMMENDATION No. 6 — The Committee recommends that the federal government foster creative initiatives which inform viewers about television violence and make them more television literate, using television itself as the educational tool.

The Committee was interested to learn from Barbara Merriam, representing the National Clearing House on Family Violence, Health and Welfare Canada, that her department is working with the National Film Board on reaching an agreement to produce a media literacy guide which could be used in schools across the country.¹²⁷ The Committee congratulates these two agencies on this initiative and hopes that television violence will form a major component of their proposed media literacy project. The Committee urges the Minister of Health and Welfare to lend support and encouragement to this project by ensuring that the production agreement is concluded as quickly as possible, thereby enabling the project to move ahead.

Finally, the Committee was struck by the powerful messages which documentary films can convey about the culture of violence. The NFB's presentation to the Committee of video clips from *Not a Love Story*, *Still Killing Us Softly* and *Toying With Their Future* made this point very dramatically. The Film Board indicated that it has been confronting and questioning attitudes about violence in our society for over ten years, using the film medium as a catalyst for public debate:

Since 1980 the National Film Board has produced several important films that have looked at attitudes towards sexuality and violence in our culture. We've looked at childhood sexual abuse, pornography, violence and abuse to the elderly, male violence in the home, and we've also looked at social violence. Many of these films continue to be well used a decade after their release into the marketplace. As a group of films, they have advanced public discussion and reflection on these important social issues facing Canadians.¹²⁸