

- 2) *to determine if there is any connection or a cause and effect relationship between this phenomenon and the incidence of violent crime in society.*⁷⁰

The Royal Commission reviewed 4,000 research titles, initiated 28 research projects, held 61 public hearings across the province of Ontario, and received briefs, submissions or letters from more than 1,000 individuals and organizations and hundreds of oral presentations. The Royal Commission published an *Interim Report* in January 1976 and a final *Report* later the same year; the seven large volumes that made up the final *Report* contain 87 wide-ranging recommendations.

In its letter submitting the *Report* to Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, the members of the Ontario Royal Commission wrote that they had “*studied the effects on society of the increasing exhibition of violence in the communications industry. We have determined a connection between this phenomenon and the incidence of violent crime in society.*”⁷¹

On the basis of “*the great weight of research into the effects of violent media content*”, the Royal Commission found that television violence created “*potential harm to society*”.⁷² While the Royal Commission also found that the “*depiction of violence in the media is only one of the many social factors contributing to crime*”, it concluded that “*it is the largest single variable most amenable to rectification*”.⁷³

The Royal Commission’s most important suggestion to solve the problem of violence in the media was to ensure the provision of “*more and better alternatives for public entertainment, information and education*”.⁷⁴ To achieve this, the Royal Commission believed that a “*revolution might be required to bring Canadian television back into the service of Canadians and under real Canadian control*”⁷⁵ and that, unlike the situation in the United States, it was not quite too late for a major reconstruction of the broadcasting system in Canada. Recommendation No. 3, which flowed from this belief, was indeed revolutionary:

*Consequently, the Commission recommends a radically altered television system, more sensitive to the needs of the public, including the diminution of depicted violence. The new system would eliminate existing Canadian broadcasting entities placing all Canadian television programming under public control of an organization to be called Television Canada/Télévision Canada to serve all Canadians with a multi-channel, publicly directed cable system to include U.S. and other imported programs, but with a stricter control of violent content.*⁷⁶

The Royal Commission also made several practical recommendations which are still relevant today. For example, it recommended that until the broadcasting system’s overhaul was completed, the CRTC “*be required to monitor program content, especially for violence and other anti-social acts, as part of its procedure for issuing or renewing licences to use the publicly owned airwaves.*”⁷⁷ It recommended that a classification system be established “*to determine the suitability of television programs for children’s viewing . . .*”⁷⁸ and that this classification system “*be adopted by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, which would require its implementation by all licensees and enforce its use by regular monitoring.*”⁷⁹