

Similarly, Dr. E. Barker, President of the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, emphasized the importance to crime prevention of the proper care of children in their first three years of life:

...if we don't do it right in the earliest years—and I put that figure at three years; other people put it at two or five—when affection and the capacity to respond to affection are learned, then a vigorous system of trying later on to stamp on social values that are crime-free is doomed. You have to have people who are nurtured to do that. (76:6-7)

A number of witnesses gave evidence to the Committee that many violent young and adult offenders had either witnessed or directly experienced physical and/or sexual abuse as children. Howard Sapers of the John Howard Society of Alberta read into the record of the Committee's proceedings a portion of an article published in *The Province* on 17 January 1993. The article presents findings from research on violence conducted by Simon Fraser University professor Steve Hart and University of British Columbia professor Don Dutton.

Childhood abuse breeds abusers. . .abused children are three times more likely than the rest of the population to become violent adults. Physically abused children are five times as likely to be violent as adults towards a family member. Sexually abused children are eight times as likely to be sexually violent as adults towards a family member. And severity of childhood abuse does not predict adult problems. . .It's not how badly you were beaten. It's whether you were beaten. (81:47)

The Committee is aware of recent research that demonstrates sexual abuse plays an important role in the development of a sex offender. A 1992 Manitoba study of 35 sex offenders, all aged 14, found that by the time they entered treatment they had collectively assaulted over 70 children in 750 incidents. On average, the boys were aged twelve and a half when they began committing sexual assaults. Over half of their victims were seven years old or younger. Over 90% of the boys had been sexually abused themselves and came from families in which physical and sexual abuse had occurred for generations.<sup>26</sup>

The Committee heard of the impact of child sexual abuse on Aboriginal women from Carol Hutchings of the Elizabeth Fry Society of Edmonton.

The progression we see over and over again is sexual abuse, truancy, running away from home, prostitution, drug abuse, and criminal behaviour. The first year I worked with the Elizabeth Fry Society 17 of our clients died. Fourteen of those clients were aboriginal and all were victims of early childhood sexual abuse. (81:30)

Dr. Barker's extensive experience with adolescents charged with murder and rape has led him to conclude that the unequal status of women is at the root of much of the violence in our society. He told the Committee:

... I think we need to look at the repercussions of a patriarchal society in which arbitrary male dominance is still a factor, which penalizes half of the population, and the subtle and not-too-subtle reverberations of that for women and for children and for men. . . if we were to create a social system in which men and women were equal, then it might be possible to begin to look at children as equals as well. (76:8)

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<sup>26</sup> Ruth Teichroeb, "Study Uncovers Cycle of Abuse", *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 12, 1992.