

The Honourable Warren Allmand, Solicitor General of Canada

December 18, 1975

Mr. Bruce Rawson, Deputy Minister, National Welfare, Department of National Health and Welfare

Mr. D. C. Préfontaine, Director, Policy Unit, Department of the Solicitor General

Mr. H. G. Needham, Senior Policy Analyst, Department of the Solicitor General

January 27, 1976

Dr. John P. Anderson, Director of Outpatient Services, Izaak Walton Killam Hospital for Children, Halifax, Nova Scotia

Professor Murray Fraser, Dean of Law, University of Victoria, B.C.

January 29, 1976

Dr. H. B. Cotnam, Chief Coroner for Ontario

February 5, 1976

Dr. George W. Goth, Minister of United Church, London, Ontario

Dr. David Bakan, Psychology Department, York University, Toronto, Ontario

February 6, 1976

Ms. Karen Molgaard, Executive Assistant to Ms. Mary Van Stolk for Ms. Mary Van Stolk

February 17, 1976

Mr. Bryon Gero, Vice President, Ontario Association of Professional Social Workers

Professor Cyril Greenland, Ontario Association of Professional Social Workers

February 24, 1976

Mrs. Margaret Hughes for The Honourable Ronald Basford, Minister of Justice

The following individuals and organizations submitted briefs or material but did not appear before the Committee:

- The Mental Health Committee, Canadian Pediatric Society
- Section on Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Retardation, Canadian Psychiatric Association
- The Canadian Council on Social Development
- The Honourable James Taylor, Q.C., Minister of Community and Social Services, Province of Ontario
- The Honourable William N. Vander Zalm, Minister of Human Resources, Province of British Columbia (*Appended to Issue No. 38*)
- Mr. John A. MacDonald, School of Social Work, University of British Columbia
- The Saskatoon Interdisciplinary Committee on Child Abuse
- L'Association des Femmes Diplômées des Universités (Montréal)*
- Mrs. Corinne Robertshaw, Ottawa, Ontario

INTRODUCTION

The Committee took evidence from the witnesses listed above in the course of eight sittings and received briefs and letters from other organizations and individuals.

We are indebted to all those who took part in the proceedings and to those who contributed in various other ways to our understanding of the problem and the issues. We were impressed with the general concern expressed by all those with whom we came in contact, and their sincere desire to protect our country's children.

In formulating recommendations, we have attempted to set the problem in the context of our country's social, economic and legal framework.

Because we are conscious of the fact that critical services for neglected and abused children are in the provincial domain, we have concentrated on those aspects which would, in our opinion, assist in a better understanding of the general nature of the problem and have attempted to confine deliberations to those aspects where federal action might be involved.

We regret that there was not time to receive evidence from all persons and groups who might have wished to appear. We believe, however, that the briefs and material presented represent existing points of view on this subject.

In preparing our comments and recommendations, we have borne in mind the following:

- that there is no one cause of child neglect or abuse;
- that physical abuse is the extreme end of the continuum of child neglect and that there is no firm dividing line between neglect and abuse;
- that the detection of neglect and abuse and services to neglected and abused children are a provincial responsibility and governed by provincial law;
- that the federal government has a role in respect of child neglect and abuse which is reflected in the Criminal Code, cost-sharing arrangements with the provinces and territories for certain health and welfare services, grants for research and demonstration projects and consultative and other services to the provinces and territories.

The terms of reference of the Committee went beyond the physical abuse of children or what is known as "child battering" to all phases of neglect.

Your Committee therefore examined the definitions of a child considered to be in need of protection under provincial legislation, and those presented by a number of witnesses. (*See Appendix B*). These definitions cover a wide range of situations where protection is needed. At the one extreme, there is the situation where no physical or mental abuse is involved but where action is required because there is no person to care for the child when the parents are dead. At the other extreme is the situation where physical abuse results in permanent injury, or even death.

There is thus a continuum which at one end involves no wilful or deliberate neglect to the extreme where there is