

responsibility for changing our passive acceptance of the present situation. The Committee does not believe that truly preventive action can or will be taken until a national understanding develops that violence against women is related to the unequal status of women in Canadian society and until responses are developed based on that understanding.

RECOMMENDATION 25

The Committee recommends that the federal government take a leadership role and work with women's groups across the country and with the provinces to establish a royal commission on violence against women.

The terms of reference for the Royal Commission should include:

- The composition of the Royal Commission should be predominantly women. Consideration for membership on the Commission should be given to immigrant women, visible minority women, aboriginal women, women representing equality-seeking groups, lesbian women, women of various ages from urban and rural communities in the various regions of Canada, women with disabilities, and women from English and French speaking communities.
- The members of the Royal Commission should have a demonstrated understanding of violence against women, an awareness of the relationship between victimization and their economic and social inequality, and a commitment to improving the status of women and, by extension, women's security and safety.
- The Royal Commission's mandate should include an examination of women's experiences of physical and sexual assault and sexual harassment. As well the Commission should examine the influences or causes of violence against women and the costs and effects of violence against women on women, children, the family and the community.
- The Royal Commission's mandate should also include an analysis of how government and non-government agencies, physical education and recreation organizations, institutions and programs respond to violence against women. The study should include the criminal justice system, the health, education and social service sectors, religious organizations, the media, the government.
- The Royal Commission should establish consultative bodies or task forces made up of representatives from community-based agencies and national organizations to examine services, prevention models, and educational