

Public Service, and the information about the representation of women in positions of authority, the existence of the Secretary of State Women's Program is extremely relevant and above all necessary."

(Femmes regroupées pour l'accessibilité
au pouvoir politique et économique
(FRAPPE), (Ottawa, March 17, 1987)

(C) FRÉEDOM FROM VIOLENCE

"We have a society that fosters the concept of two classes. One is made up of men who have the money, make the laws, implement the laws in the courts, and who are innocent until proven guilty. And another class, made up of women and children with little money or power, who must prove their innocence of the crimes committed against them."

(P.E.I. Rape and Sexual Assault Crisis
Centre, Halifax, April 13, 1987)

Several witnesses described the enormity of the problem of violence against women whether sexual assault or wife battering. They also told of the extensive efforts of volunteers who give their time generously to help victims of violence. Through the operation of women's resource centres, rape and sexual assault crisis centres and transition homes, volunteers provide information, sanctuary, and moral support to women in distress.

Many of these witnesses describe funding under the Women's Program as their life-line. The Newfoundland Provincial Association Against Family Violence said that the Women's Program is its only source of funding and without this support the Association would not exist. (St. John's, April 15, 1987)

In the Northwest Territories, the Hay River Women's Coalition has been able, with the help of Secretary of State funding, to set up a resource centre for women and a "Safe Home Network" which gives information and emotional support to battered women.

Progress has been made but there is more work to do. Many women in Canada still live with fear and pain partly because they do not know what the alternatives are and partly because they are isolated. With few options available to them, many women "continue to suffer physical, emotional, sexual and economic abuse." (Provincial Association Against Family Violence, Newfoundland).

The P.E.I. Rape and Sexual Assault Crisis Centre is a voluntary organization funded by the Women's Program which provides information and support to sexually assaulted women. In a moving presentation to the Committee, they urged that violence against women be recognized as a basic status of women issue which, because of its universality, should be addressed through long-term operational funding.