

resources to move into the rental market nor access to affordable housing. There is also a dearth of emergency, second-stage housing that offers accommodation for a longer term than can be offered by transition houses.

Bluma Teram, Director, Lincoln Road Apartments, YWCA, Kitchener-Waterloo told the Committee that amongst the multiple needs of abused women, safe, affordable housing is paramount.

Only after safety and affordability have been secured can a woman begin to deal with other serious concerns, such as legal issues, physical and emotional health problems, education and retraining and working towards economic independence. (4:68)

The Committee is aware of and supports the federal government's recently announced program Next Step, which is designed to create 150 to 170 housing units to meet the longer-term housing needs of battered women and their children. The length of stay in such accommodation would be for six months to a year. However, the Committee is concerned that this short-term housing, while necessary, does not respond to the urgency and gravity of the unmet long-term housing requirements of single mothers and their children.

RECOMMENDATION 15

The Committee recommends that the federal government take the lead role in coordinating the development of a housing policy in Canada and providing tangible support to resolve the crisis in affordable and accessible accommodation confronting low income earners and the poor, particularly for women who are not safe in their homes.

I. REMOVAL OF VIOLENT MEN FROM THE FAMILY HOME

Witnesses questioned the practice that requires an assaulted woman and her children to leave the family home to ensure their safety. They noted that in addition to the problems in obtaining alternative accommodation, fleeing the family home has profoundly disruptive effects on children. They not only leave the familiarity of their home but that of their school, their friends and their neighbourhood at a time when the family is in crisis. Witnesses suggested that, after the arrest of a violent man, a Crown prosecutor could ask a Judge to issue, as a special condition of release pending trial, an order prohibiting the accused from returning to the area of the family home. However, they pointed out that existing legal instruments to protect women, such as "no contact" judicial orders prohibiting batterers from approaching or contacting their wives or children, are constantly ignored. Women and children are frequently harassed,