

Government Orders

The government's action concerning refugees and immigrants has created apprehension and deep mistrust of refugees among the broader population.

The government's lengthy delay with regard to a decision on the Sikh turban issue contributed to the rise of racial discord, particularly in western Canada.

This government has failed to adequately address the issue of pay equity and discrimination in the workplace for visible minorities. A Canadian Ethnocultural Council study demonstrated that only 2.9 per cent of the public servants were visible minorities. This figure hardly approximates the labour force participation rate of 6.4 per cent.

Numerous reports and the government's own statistics show that visible minorities have a one in four chance to be hired in the Public Service of Canada compared to an applicant whose skin is white.

The Canadian Human Rights Commission stated in its 1989 annual report that "systemic biases will no doubt be brought to light by serious employment equity analysis". The federal government must do more to prevent discrimination in testing and selection for federal public service employment.

Recent revelations about racial discrimination within the Canadian justice system have shocked many Canadians. The Manitoba Justice Inquiry, the Donald Marshall Inquiry, and various judicial inquiries have pointed to the existence of institutional racism.

The Department of the Secretary of State claims in a report to the United Nations on the International Convention of the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination that "measures have been adopted to protect and advance the special position of the aboriginal peoples in Canadian society".

In reality the department has cut funding totalling \$9.7 million to native programs. Furthermore, 99 per cent of the total loss in departmental funding comes at the expense of native peoples.

Cuts to the Native Communications Program, the Native Broadcast Access Program, and the Native Friendship Centres have closed off avenues that would have led to the greater participation of aboriginal peoples in the Canadian mosaic.

The government, through the Secretary of State, has also decimated through recent budget cuts the Heritage Language Schools program. This program was designed

to promote racial harmony and national unity by providing an opportunity for the preservation and understanding of ethnic languages and cultures.

Madam Speaker, at a time when racial intolerance is on the rise in Canada this government should be taking steps to promote and protect minorities.

Yes, institutions such as the one we are debating today are needed, but government action should reflect the will of those institutions.

The government cannot create an institution that promotes racial equality and then turn around and continue to discriminate in its hiring practices, and continue to slash programs set up to promote understanding.

If we want to eliminate racism and intolerance, we must begin to take down barriers to minorities. The government has a responsibility to be a leader in this respect and it has yet to take on that role.

I support the creation of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation because any and all steps to end racism must be taken. The hatred of racism must be extinguished. We can do this only through educating Canadians. Racism is not hereditary or innate. No man or woman has ever been born a hater of Jews, Sikhs, blacks, Chinese, or of any religion or race. It is not natural to hate, and every measure must be taken to show all Canadians that racism will not be tolerated in this great land. If the establishment of the Canadian race relations foundation can help to do this, then let us get on with establishing the foundation and putting an end to racism in Canada.

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Madam Speaker. I congratulate the previous speaker on a very well expressed, deeply emotional speech.

I have received several letters from multicultural groups in Saskatoon concerning cuts in funding to the Heritage Language Program. I wonder if the member could elaborate on that.

Mrs. Gaffney: Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to respond to that. I briefly alluded to the heritage language schools in my comments.

As a matter of interest, some of my colleagues and I met with the leaders of the heritage language schools in the national capital region. We met with about 30 local people who were involved in the various schools—and we have quite a number of them, probably 15 in this