

*Supply*

We have to face up to what the researchers and the evidence tells us. It tells us that many Canadians actually believe in the theory of racial superiority, that one Canadian in seven carries out acts of open discrimination. Imbalance and discrimination does exist. Prejudice, discrimination and the virtual exclusion of visible minorities and native Canadians have been the standard operating procedure in much of the Canadian life for just about as long as anyone can remember.

How can we accept that blacks are turned down three times as often when looking for rental accommodation? Or that a black applicant is offered only one job for every three offered to a white? Or that a Micmac can spend years in prison for a crime that he did not commit? Or that products with demeaning stereotypical representations of minority Canadians can find ready markets? Is there any justification? Well, of course, there is not and we all know it. In order to eliminate racism in Canada, we have to comprehend how and why it works the way it does, how it perpetuates itself generation after generation. We must make our way beneath the paint on the surface, as British writer Paul Gilroy put it. We must understand this frightening ultimate perversion that makes the victim himself responsible for his fate.

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The stereotyping that we see in broadcasting and advertising, the jokes told in locker rooms all contribute to making possible the act of discrimination itself and they help justify it afterwards.

But a great myth is the idea that racism is somehow part and parcel of the human condition, something we have to accept whether we like it or not because we cannot change it. Racism is not part of the human spirit. We can change racism. We do not have to live with it in our society or in any society. As Canadians we cannot allow racism to corrupt our own principles. We must uphold the values of equality and social justice. They are centre to who we are as Canadians. To cure this cancer there must be firm, clear and determined leadership.

In this proclamation of the United Nations Second Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, the Prime Minister expressed the will of this government when he called on us all, and I quote: "To work together toward the day when racism and racial

discrimination become history and when every Canadian can participate fully and equally in the life of our country".

We have put into place structures and mechanisms to take up this challenge. This government introduced the Employment Equity Act. Then in July, 1988, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act was unanimously adopted by both Houses. This provided a legislative base for new directions for multiculturalism programs featuring a major new race relations and cross-cultural understanding program. Through these programs Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada is forging strong partnerships in all sectors of society; business, labour, professional groups, municipalities and community-based volunteer organizations and to take action to eliminate racism and racial discrimination in Canada. These partnerships are active—and I want to give you several examples—building awareness through public education, changing the policies and practices of our own institutions, finding out more about racism and racial discrimination and how to fight it with the foundation that we are establishing, working to set the example in federal institutions and agencies and working together with other levels of government.

Yesterday, the Secretary of State and Minister of State for Multiculturalism and Citizenship tabled a bill in the House to establish the race relations foundation. We look forward to early passage of this bill in order to get this foundation going. The new department of multiculturalism and citizenship to be established by Bill C-18 will be another permanent expression of the government's commitment to fighting tolerance and prejudice and another important resource in this battle.

March 21 is International Day designated for the elimination of racial discrimination. It will be the focus for a major public education campaign again this year. Events are being organized in communities across the country, and Canadians in all parts of the country will have an opportunity to get involved personally. I encourage everyone to take part. This is an occasion for each of us to affirm our personal commitment to equality, to our fellow Canadians and to a stronger Canada in the days and years ahead. Only if we stand up, each in our own way, for the values that we share as Canadians can we stand with pride and look with confidence to the future.