

Witnesses before the Committee argued passionately and convincingly for changes in the law, political structure, employment practices, government policies, the media, settlement programs, and the educational system.

The Committee was created by the House of Commons on June 27, 1983 and undertook its investigation until the end of the First Session of the Thirty-Second Parliament on November 30, 1983. It was then reconstituted in the Second Session on December 13, 1983. To ensure that the Canadian public was informed about its work, the Committee placed advertisements in major daily newspapers across the country. The last advertisement was placed just prior to its arrival in major cities. The Committee received hundreds of letters; approximately 300 briefs were sent to Ottawa and 130 groups of witnesses were heard in Ottawa, Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Regina, Yellowknife, Whitehorse, Edmonton and Vancouver. The Minister of Justice and the Minister of State for Multiculturalism testified before the Committee. The Committee also actively solicited information from other sources, both private and public.

Positive models were found, which are working successfully. They demonstrate that things can be done without the disasters and severe dislocations that some are inclined to predict. At the same time the Committee found evidence of people who are angry, frustrated, denied a sense of belonging and clearly denied equality of opportunity. They argued passionately and convincingly for changes in the law, political structure, employment practices, government policies, the media, settlement programs, and the educational system. In preparing its report the Committee examined solutions to many manifestations of racism and they are reported. The Committee believes working on solutions to institutional racism to be more important than just individual racism. Programs for active awareness are more important than merely improving understanding. Action must be taken quickly and decisively if Canada is to become a just society for all Canadians, including visible minorities. The Parliament of Canada has already indicated strong support for this principle in section 27 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which states:

This Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canada.

During its investigations and throughout the drafting of the report the Committee had certain basic principles in mind. First, that the Parliament of Canada accepts and should clearly state that racism in any form will not be tolerated. Second, that the Parliament of Canada is deeply aware of its obligation to be constantly vigilant in protecting minorities against acts of discrimination. Third, that Canadian society must constantly make adjustments in its individual and institutional practices to ensure that minorities are able to retain their culture and are not denied equality of opportunity. Finally, that the Parliament of Canada, with the assistance of individuals and organizations, should seek the general consensus of all Canadians of the justness of these ideals. The Committee is of the view that these or similar principles should be found in the preamble to the new Multiculturalism Act.

The Committee believes the positive models and recommendations presented in this report should be implemented by governments and private institutions as a means of achieving equality of opportunity for visible minorities in Canada.