

RECOMMENDATION

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- There is already an adequate number of visible minority candidates with the necessary qualifications from which to draw for appointments.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Federal Government should use Governor-in-Council appointments to increase the participation of visible minorities on federal boards and commissions as well as in the senior management of the Public Service and Crown corporations.

ADD VISIBLE MINORITIES TO THE LIST OF TARGET GROUPS FOR MANDATORY AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The under-representation of visible minorities within the federal public service at all levels was a constant theme in briefs and at hearings before the Committee. Perceived obstacles to adequate representation were identified with respect to a) entering the public service:

- The practical obstacle of preference for citizens over landed immigrants;
- Linguistic and/or cultural biases in the selection process (e.g. different accents, behaviour patterns, etc.);
- Biased evaluation of foreign academic or professional credentials. b) career development:
- Visible minority public servants, and especially visible minority women, are constantly underemployed;
- Professionals from visible minorities reach an early career plateau.

As a result of these perceived obstacles, many witnesses before the Committee advocated the implementation of comprehensive affirmative action programs in the public service for visible minorities. Requests were made for the removal of structural barriers to entry and promotion, for access to internal training and career development programs, and for the increased representation of qualified members of visible minorities through positive action in recruitment.

Difficult: There are several existing affirmative action programs within the federal public service, whose target groups have been identified variously as women, the handicapped and native people. Many have been in operation since the mid-70s, yet it is often difficult to evaluate their efficacy. This is apparently due in part to the voluntary nature of these programs - few if any sanctions could be imposed on departments with poor performance records and few if any specific goals or targets were set. Even with a high degree of political will, such a loosely structured voluntary system would be difficult to effectively implement. At the same time, the fact that both native persons and the handicapped together constitute less than 2 per cent of employees in the federal public service, and that women continue to be seriously under-represented at managerial levels, suggests