

Oral Questions

RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO VISIBLE MINORITIES

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Multiculturalism. The Abella Commission identified and declared war on the many economic inequalities facing visible minorities. It was forcefully stated that the war must start with an attack on racism. This and other courageous recommendations were the product of long consultations with numerous visible minority groups across Canada. They deserve and demand government action. My question is very simple. Will the Minister assure this House that he will pursue, without delay, implementation and advocacy of those recommendations in the report relating to visible minorities in Canada?

Hon. Jack Murta (Minister of State (Multiculturalism)): Mr. Speaker, the fundamental thrust of the Abella report coincides in a great many ways with the report *Equality Now!*, an all-party committee report, one with which most Members of this House agree. This Government, as indicated by my colleague, the Minister of Employment and Immigration, is looking at the recommendations. Multicultural Canada is also looking at the recommendations. We intend to act just as quickly as we can on many of the recommendations which directly affect the visible minority community in our country.

• (1440)

Mr. Marchi: I hope someone starts to act rather than just to look.

DISCRIMINATION IN TAXI INDUSTRY

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Transport. He is surely aware of the serious racial discrimination practices against blacks, East Indians, and Haitians in the Canadian taxi industry. Since his Department—

Mr. Speaker: No. With great respect, the Member asked his first question with regard to the Abella Report. This is hardly a supplementary to that question. I appreciate the Member's concern, but I must establish does the Member have a supplementary question to his question with regard to the Abella report.

Mr. Marchi: I respect your decision, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Multiculturalism is surely aware of the discrimination against East Indians, Asians, and members of the Haitian community, in the taxi industry in this country. Will he petition the Minister of Transport to revoke any taxi licences of companies that are shown to be practising racial discrimination and are operating out of airports across the country? Will he, in fact, bring in new guidelines to ensure that such discrimination employment practices will stop in the future?

Hon. Jack Murta (Minister of State (Multiculturalism)): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Hon. Member that I am in touch with my colleague and good friend, the Minister of

Transport, on literally a daily basis. We will be discussing his concerns.

POSSIBLE GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Ernie Epp (Thunder Bay-Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. It also deals with the Abella report. Yesterday Judge Abella pointed out that among the groups she was dealing with, disabled persons and visible minorities had suffered from systematic discrimination in the past. There are various possibilities for redressing that situation. What possibility does the Minister see for taking early action on this, beyond the matter of contract compliance?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, as I explained, there are some 117 recommendations in the Abella report. We will be studying them as a Cabinet and as individual Ministers to see which ones can be proceeded with most quickly.

LINGUISTIC DIFFICULTIES OF IMMIGRANTS

Mr. Ernie Epp (Thunder Bay-Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, what plans does the Minister have for those members of visible minorities who are recent immigrants to Canada and have difficulty speaking English or French? What plans does she have for expanding instruction in English or French, depending on where the persons are resident, in order to facilitate entry into the workforce by these members of the visible minorities?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I think that this question should more properly be directed to the Secretary of State with whom language requirements really lie.

Nevertheless, there are two areas in which this could be addressed. One is in making changes to the agreements under the National Training Act. Those will be on the agenda for the discussions which will take place in the forthcoming year. The other is with regard to ISAP, the Immigrant Settlement Adaptation Program, in my Department. I am sure that the Hon. Member will have noticed that the budget for that was increased by half a million dollars just the other day.

* * *

HIGHWAYS

YELLOWHEAD HIGHWAY—REQUEST FOR DESIGNATION AS NATIONAL HIGHWAY

Mr. John Gormley (The Battlefords-Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. The Yellowhead Highway which extends from Winnipeg, Manitoba, to Kamloops, British Columbia, is the busiest highway route through the Province of Saskatchewan. The volume of traffic on that highway is even greater than that on the