

RECOMMENDATION

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REQUIRE "CANADIAN CONTENT" TO INCLUDE ELEMENTS OF CANADIAN MULTICULTURALISM

Wider: A key concept in cultural policy, especially with regard to television programming and the making of feature films, is that of "Canadian content." The Canadian Black Performers Association stated that they understood "Canadian content" to have an essential element of multiculturalism, and that the use of multiracial cast and even technical personnel would be a way of quantifying this element. They suggested additional tax incentives could be granted to film-makers who pursued Canadian-content objectives to the extent of using Canadian personnel from racial minorities. The Committee feels this suggestion merits further study, with a view to wider application.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Department of Communications should define "Canadian content" in film, television and other media as including a dimension of Canadian multiculturalism.

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MAKE PRESTIGIOUS ANNUAL AWARDS IN AREAS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO HARMONIOUS RACE RELATIONS

No Expectations: Since racism has deep roots in our society, we should not expect institutions and individuals to change overnight, especially those who are involved in culture, education and information.

Changes: Racism has always been an issue in Canadian life, at least since the European settlement of the land, but it is only in the past two decades that demographic changes have given prominence to race relations in nearly every urban centre in the country.

Defensive: Media personnel and media output, however, have remained largely ethnocentric until now. Taking heavy criticism from both opponents and proponents of multiracialism, many media institutions appear to be on the defensive, unsure of and unwilling to deal with sensitive racial issues. Representatives of the media who communicated with the Committee appeared unwilling to accept a leadership role for the media in improving race relations in Canada.

Obvious: While a few media personnel and perhaps even institutions are in principle opposed to multiculturalism and multiracialism, the vast majority of Canadian media are definitely not. Given time, these institutions will perceive ethnic and race relations as a major contemporary issue to be neither downplayed nor overplayed, and with community encouragement, will accept that racial harmony is as obvious a national goal as clean air or physical fitness.

The League for Human Rights (B'nai B'rith) has a Media Human Rights Award which has been presented annually for the last nine years to the radio, television and print media. An award and an honourable mention are given in