

RECOMMENDATION

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ESTABLISH CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FOR VISIBLE MINORITIES

Powers: There is a problem of misunderstanding on the part of visible minorities of the purpose and limitations on police powers in Canadian society and a misunderstanding on the part of the police of the cultural attitudes of visible minorities.

Insult: An example of this was an incident where a flag was stolen from a Sikh temple in Edmonton. The police received the complaint in a rather perfunctory way and took a report of the theft under \$200. Given the importance of the flag to the Sikh community, they saw the police response as an insult.

Better: The City of Edmonton responded to this situation by creating the Community Services Officers Program. It is an excellent effort on the part of the Edmonton Police Department to alleviate the problems that arise from such misunderstandings as the flag incident. The Police Force decided to employ civilians directly from minority communities, who would not be sworn officers and who would not wear uniforms, to act as go-betweens.

The RCMP has also undertaken such an initiative by developing the Native Policing Program which trains Native Special Constables for a wide range of policing duties on reserves, and occasionally in the cities. They work under the supervision of RCMP officers.

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) as well has a program for Special Constables. It represents a lower level position than full members, but is viewed as a positive first step. There are some 190 person years of staffing in this program; 168 are in service and a training class begins this year to fill 21 vacancies.

Ontario also maintains a Native Special Constable Program for policing Indian communities under the supervision of OPP officers. In Quebec, Native Special Constables police Indian communities as an independent police force controlled by an Indian Policing Council.

Success: Although the various police forces mentioned encourage and support the upgrading of the Special Constables, the Committee feels that greater access to full membership could be obtained if there was a clearly defined career development plan within a specified time-frame. At the present time, Edmonton Community Service Workers are hired at the equivalent to the police recruit entry level and there is no provision for rising above it.

RECOMMENDATION:

Solicitor General Canada should establish a career development program for visible minorities seeking to become Special Constables. All other police forces should do the same for visible minorities who are Civilian Community Service Officers.