

INCREASE THE PARTICIPATION OF VISIBLE MINORITIES ON FEDERAL BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Crucial: There is a widespread perception that visible minorities are significantly under-represented on federal boards and commissions and at the most senior levels of the public service. This perceived lack of representation at the top is considered to be a crucial problem because the absence of any positive role models affects the image which visible minorities have of themselves. It leads them to conclude that unnecessary obstacles continue to exist which prevent their full participation in the public life of their country. It also distorts the majority's image of Canadian society, reducing visible minorities once again to the invisible.

Benefits: It has also been argued that several positive benefits would result from an increased presence of visible minorities in these types of positions. Such appointments could serve to encourage visible minority youth to consider a public service career and could also enhance minority recruitment potential at all levels. The appointment of visible minorities to boards and commissions such as the CRTC and the Canada Council would increase the sensitivity of these bodies to the concerns of those minorities, in the same way that the case has been made for women and other target groups.

2,000: Board and Commission positions are staffed by Governor-in-Council appointments - that is, appointments made by the Prime Minister in consultation with his Cabinet colleagues and, in the case of deputy ministers and heads of Crown corporations, the Committee of Senior Officials. There are approximately 2,000 such positions, of which some 450 are full time. However, in a given time period only a certain number become available. For example, in 1983 there were 682 appointments made, the majority of which were reappointments. Only 122 were for full-time positions.

Action: At the federal level, appointments in the Governor-in-Council category have already been successfully used as a mechanism for positive action by the government. Such appointments reflect a higher rate of participation for francophones and women, for example, than those made under the Public Service Employment Act.

Promising: Given the current restraints on hiring in the federal public service and the well-documented barriers to advancement which members of all disadvantaged groups along with their majority colleagues already employed in the public service presently are encountering, Governor-in-Council appointments would appear to be one of the most promising areas in which the federal government could easily and decisively demonstrate a leadership role with respect to the participation of visible minorities in the public sector in the immediate future.

These appointments would be facilitated by the following factors:

- The rotational or limited terms of the present incumbents allow for an immediate increase in the representation of the target groups without disrupting operations.
- Only a small number of posts would be needed to achieve representation.

RECOMMENDATION

21

