

B. Public Awareness

A number of witnesses suggested that the government should establish a coordinated public education program encompassing employers, employee representatives, designated groups and the general public. Many of these witnesses stated that they were not aware of any money currently being allocated to educate the various interested parties on the economic and social imperatives that underlie employment equity.

Those favouring such an educational campaign argued that increased awareness, not quotas, will encourage employers to hire members of the designated groups. Witnesses felt that this campaign should be developed, in the spirit of partnership, with the involvement of all those concerned with employment equity.

The Committee strongly supports the idea of public education about employment equity.

C. Education

Although many witnesses focused their remarks on the need for appropriate training for members of the designated groups, some probed even more deeply into the root causes of employment inequity. The Committee was told that a parallel commitment to equality in employment would be empty without a commitment to education equity. Some witnesses questioned society's overall commitment to employment equity in view of the inequities that are currently perpetuated by the educational systems.

The argument for education equity was made by representatives from all the designated groups. In the case of people with disabilities, the data from HALS 1986 demonstrate that disabled persons enter the work force with significantly lower educational levels than the non-disabled population. Aboriginal organizations pointed out that without enhanced funding for post-secondary education and other educational programs, Aboriginal peoples will continue to be disproportionately represented in low-paying jobs and among the unemployed. Immigrants from the visible minority community pointed out that their opportunities for employment suffered because they could not gain additional educational qualifications.

Some employers gave the Committee another perspective on this issue. They pointed out that there will be fewer qualified people to meet higher demands for skills as Canada moves through the last decade of the century. One way to meet this challenge would be for education authorities and employers jointly to sponsor university programs for members of the designated groups. They recommended an educational strategy to deal with problems such as sex-role stereotyping and racism.

D. Assistance

Various witnesses made a case that employers and members of the designated groups should be assisted to be more effective in locating qualified group members and in accommodating them within the work place. Other witnesses mentioned the desirability of having better technical information to analyse the physical demands of a particular job, to train human resource professionals, to gain information on accommodation and to obtain other technical assistance and computer software suitable for business purposes. Members of the designated groups urged the federal government to provide assistance for them to monitor the progress of employment equity programs.

E. Other Government Measures

The Committee firmly believes that the federal government, in all aspects of its operations and its programs, should demonstrate its full commitment to employment equity by putting its own house in order.