

What should the Government of Canada do to facilitate the development of citizenship education in Canada?

There is a need to establish national goals for citizenship education in Canada. Professor Sears has suggested the Council of Ministers of Education Canada might be encouraged to work toward this objective. He advised the development of citizenship education programs "where students in this country could at least come to understand the different regions of the country, and the country from different perspectives." (8:13)

Professor Breton mentioned that many things have been done in this country in cooperative ways, and suggested that Canadian studies should be developed showing how different regions have been interdependent and how they have cooperated through the federal government. Supporting this view, Professor Sears referred to the success of French immersion programs, and second language education programs, where the federal government has helped to coordinate national policy, very successfully. He cautioned that the cultural context in which citizenship education might be developed should not be ignored.

CONCLUSION

This Interim Report outlines some of the major concerns that were communicated to our Committee by the witnesses heard to date. The Committee intends, upon resumption of our study in the fall of 1992, to hear further witnesses, including representatives from a sample of voluntary, non-governmental organizations that contribute to the promotion of good citizenship. We also plan to hear witnesses who will address specific issues concerning citizenship, particularly those aspects of importance to women and aboriginal peoples.

The evidence we have heard thus far in our study underscores the need for an "updated" understanding of citizenship. Such an understanding must incorporate the changing demographic characteristics of Canada and be informed by the reality of our national diversity. In future hearings and discussions we intend to orient our study around the following questions:

1. **What is the meaning of citizenship, and how is it understood in its legal, political, and social or socio-economic dimensions?**
2. **What is the definition of a Canadian citizen or Canadian citizenship? What does Canadian citizenship mean today?**
3. **What defines us as Canadians? What is the Canadian identity?**
4. **What has citizenship meant for women in Canada?**
5. **Is there an over-arching citizenship that embraces all groups or nationalities? Is there a universal citizenship?**