

## ENABLE VISIBLE MINORITY GROUPS TO MONITOR THE MEDIA

**Anxiety:** Visible minorities are usually ignored by the media, but on the few occasions when they are presented, the presentation is often negative, or at least, not normal. In fact, visible minorities live in daily dread of what they will find communicated about themselves and their communities whenever they open the newspaper or turn on the radio or television.

**Reports:** Racism in the media was demonstrated as a frequent and intense concern in the situation reports on race relations commissioned by the Multiculturalism Directorate in early 1982, and nearly every brief presented by a visible minority group to this Committee contained criticism of the media. The outpouring of complaints amounted to an indictment of the media as a source of cultural distortion in Canadian life.

**Sensitive:** It may be that the media only reflect an increase of racism in Canada or are giving more attention to the same degree of racism, or that visible minorities have become more sensitive to the media. We would keep in mind that racial distortion occurs even when communicators make an attempt to portray racial diversity. That is to be expected. Communicators, who all their working lives have operated in a one-culture environment, cannot overnight depict racial minorities in a normal or natural manner.

**Vestige:** Racial distortion may be an unintentional vestige of our history. But we should not forget that there remains an underlying current of racism among an active minority within the Canadian society, with a 1981 Gallup poll showing 31 per cent of Canadians generally agreeing to support organizations that work towards preserving Canada for whites only. Nor should we ignore media personnel and institutions who use the media as powerful instruments of prejudice.

**Action:** Blatant prejudice in the media is best countered by those most affected. In fact, community response to racism by the media has proven more effective than official action in many cases. For example, when a television station broadcast a documentary that portrayed all ethnic Chinese students as foreigners taking unfair advantage of Canadian higher education, it was the sustained protest of the Chinese community that drew attention to the facts and forced the station ultimately to admit the falsity of the program.

**Watch:** In countering sexism in the media, local women's groups have proven to be very effective. The experience of Media Watch, a women's group that monitors the media nationally, is useful to visible minority groups concerned with media racism. We believe such groups would, with modest financial and technical assistance, be dynamic and vigilant to the numerous aspects of racism currently inherent in the media.

### RECOMMENDATION:

**The proposed Ministry of Multiculturalism should facilitate the establishment of a media watch by visible minority organizations.**

### RECOMMENDATION

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