

Oral Questions

The minister has been travelling the length and breadth of this country seeking information. One of the priorities of the department is race relations.

He has learned from his travels and the people he has met that there are people who wish to contribute in a very meaningful way to this discussion. Because of that, a network has formed from the grassroots, from the community. A report has been issued to the department, for which the minister is very grateful.

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, "entertaining"! What an interesting word. The minister travels a lot but does not hear very much.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maheu: The name of a former assistant to the minister, Ben Teitelbaum, was associated with a new task force on race relations that the minister established in Montreal. Is the minister trying to replace ethno-cultural groups with old friends and political employees?

[*English*]

Mrs. Pauline Browes (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)): Mr. Speaker, the issue of race relations and racial discrimination in Canada is one of serious concern to each of us. When we have individuals reaching out to be partners with this issue, we welcome that. Not only is this loose network of grassroots individuals and organizations coming forth to assist in this issue, we are also reaching out to the chiefs of police on this issue. We are also in a contract with the Canadian Labour Congress in order that we can do everything we possibly can to eradicate racism in Canada.

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EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice.

The record of this government in employing only 2.9 per cent visible minorities, compared to 6 per cent in the general workforce, is abysmal. The worst offenders are the Department of Justice, Correctional Services of Canada, and the Department of External Affairs.

In the absence of the Minister of State for Multiculturalism and Citizenship, I want to ask the Minister of Justice what action she intends to take to substantially increase the proportion of visible minority persons in the justice department?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice has an ongoing program to increase the representation of visible minorities among our workforce and it appears to be working very well. We think we can do better and we will do better.

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I do not know how the minister can praise that record when she has less than 2 per cent of visible minority people in her own department.

One of the worst examples of legislated racism in Canadian history was the Chinese head tax and the Chinese Exclusion Act. When will the government fulfil its promises to acknowledge these past injustices, while giving a very strong signal and a public message that racism in any form will not be tolerated in today's Canada?

Mrs. Pauline Browes (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)): Mr. Speaker, we welcome the comments of the member and her work in terms of assisting in stamping out racism.

We are doing everything we possibly can in terms of establishing the partnership within Canada in order that we can eradicate racism and we welcome the comments from the hon. member.

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ROMANIA

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

On May 14, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources told this House that since the fall of Romanian dictator, Nicolae Ceausescu, there have been no military conscripts working at the Candu reactor site.

I have just returned from Romania where I had the opportunity to speak to several of these military conscripts. I can tell the House that, in fact, they are still working at the Candu site.