

Divided Time: At the regional and local levels, officials responsible for administering the programs of the Multicultural Directorate are employees of the Secretary of State Department. These officials may have no particular expertise in race relations or multicultural policy generally, but, more importantly, they must divide their time between this area and the administration of several other programs in the department, such as human rights, native citizens, women and official languages.

Priority: The Multiculturalism Directorate has a modest budget which must be distributed internally to a variety of programs, of which the race relations unit is but one element. In fiscal 1983-84 the entire budget for the Directorate was projected to be \$20 million, with approximately \$1.7 million earmarked for initiatives in the field of race relations. These figures would appear to belie the concern expressed by some non-visible minority ethnic groups that a dramatic shift in emphasis has occurred in federal multicultural policy generally, and within the Directorate specifically. On the contrary, a review of the evidence received and its own investigation have led the Committee to conclude that a greater emphasis on race relations and the concerns of visible minorities should be given a high priority in federal multicultural policy in the near future, regardless of what approach is taken to structural revisions.

Serious: The federal government must quickly take decisive action to prevent a potentially serious race relations problem from developing. This is not a unique Canadian dilemma. Other countries such as Australia and Great Britain have seen the need for harmonious race relations and have attempted to promote good relations in a positive manner through the passage of legislation that has resulted in comprehensive race relations policies.

Background: In Canada, the 1971 policy enunciated by the federal government was a clear indication that it recognized the multicultural reality of Canadian society and accepted responsibility for protecting and promoting that cultural diversity. Its initiatives in the intervening years to implement this policy have concentrated primarily on the provision of legal safeguards, such as the Canadian Human Rights Act and entrenchment of a Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the Constitution, and financial assistance for the maintenance and development of various ethnic heritages.

Strengthened: While these initiatives are to be commended, the Committee believes that this multicultural policy must now be strengthened and greater emphasis placed on the race relations element, in order to accommodate the new realities of Canada's multiracial society. The creation of the race relations unit in the Multiculturalism Directorate in 1981-82 and the commissioning of the situation reports by the former minister the following year, as well as the establishment of this special parliamentary committee, suggest that the federal government is already aware of this situation and anxious to address the issues.

Specific: The government should proceed with legislation to provide statutory recognition for its multicultural policy, as indicated in the December 1983 Speech from the Throne. Such legislation should not only strengthen and expand on the principles enunciated in 1971, but should also create a specific department to administer the Act, thereby rectifying the numerous administrative difficulties outlined above, as well as reflecting the increased importance which the government attaches to this subject.