

RECOMMENDATION

9

Municipal Level: The municipal level of politics is in many ways the most accessible. Many federal and provincial politicians started in municipal politics. Costs are lower and travel is greatly reduced. Both campaigning and serving can be done on a part-time basis.

The Canadian Political Science Association, in cooperation with the House of Commons, supports an internship program which provides bright young Canadians with an opportunity to learn, first hand, about various aspects of the political process in the House of Commons. Ten students spend 10 months in Ottawa working as research assistants to Members of Parliament on both sides of the House. Similar programs exist in British Columbia, Alberta, Quebec and Ontario. The model should be applied at the municipal level and visible minorities should be encouraged to participate through an outreach program.

Mayors: It has been brought to the attention of the Committee that visible minorities have been successful candidates for Mayors in Selkirk, Manitoba; Owen Sound, Ontario; Sudbury, Ontario and Flin Flon, Manitoba. The reasons for their success could be featured in the ethnic press as a means of encouraging greater participation by others.

Ethnic Groups Commission: Another initiative brought to the attention of the Committee was the Ethnic Groups Commission established by a political party in Quebec. It was set up as a mechanism to accommodate the participation of ethnic groups in the political process. The Commission assured participation in the decision-making councils of the party, facilitated the acquisition of wide experience and increased the likelihood of ethnic candidates being put forward for elections. The Commission increased a sense of belonging to the party among ethnic groups.

The Committee considers the increased participation of visible minorities in the political life of our country as a matter of pressing necessity which requires a greater effort on the part of political parties and visible minorities.

RECOMMENDATION

10

RECOMMENDATION:

Political parties should increase the participation of visible minorities by developing more effective outreach programs.