

REPORT
OF THE ADVISOR ON RACE RELATIONS
TO THE PREMIER OF ONTARIO, BOB RAE

JUNE 9, 1992

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Dear Bob:

It was a month ago, in the immediate aftermath of the riots in Toronto, that you asked me to take on a brief role as your Advisor on Race Relations, consult widely, and get back to you with recommendations. This letter constitutes my report.

It's been quite an odyssey. With the help of some remarkably good people seconded to me from both political staff and the civil service bureaucracy, I've been able to cover a good deal of ground in the short period of time (albeit interrupted somewhat by previous commitments which could not be cancelled).

I've held more than seventy meetings with individuals and groups in Metro Toronto, Ottawa, Windsor and beyond, supplemented by innumerable phone conversations. These "consultations" often lasted anywhere from one to four hours in length, and covered a wide diversity of opinion and community representation. I've met with cabinet Ministers and senior civil servants, with Children's Aid Societies and municipal leaders, with School Board representatives and Law School activists, with academic experts and opposition politicians, with immigrant and refugee advocates and coalitions for police reform. I've met additionally, and predictably, with specific persons who are indispensable to the consideration of the task at hand: the Chiefs of Police of Metro Toronto, Peel, Halton, Ottawa, Gloucester, Nepean and Windsor; Ms Susan Eng, Chair of the Metro Toronto Police Services

Board; Mr. Clare Lewis, Police Complaints Commissioner; Mr. Justice Osler, head of the Special Investigations Unit; Ms Mary Cornish, directing the review of the Ontario Human Rights Commission; Ms Juanita Westmoreland-Traore, Employment Equity Commissioner.

But more important to the content of this report were the significant numbers of meetings, large and small, public and private, with representatives of the visible minority community in general, and the Black community in particular. Those discussions had a visceral impact on me.

Above all, I was further able to meet, on five different occasions, in a cross-section of locations, with large groups of young people, overwhelmingly of racial minority background, from High Schools, Community Colleges and Universities. Those encounters affected me deeply.

As a result of the overall experience, I have four initial observations to make.

First, what we are dealing with, at root, and fundamentally, is anti-Black racism. While it is obviously true that every visible minority community experiences the indignities and wounds of systemic discrimination throughout Southern Ontario, it is the Black community which is the focus. It is Blacks who are being shot, it is Black youth that is unemployed in excessive numbers, it is Black students who are being inappropriately streamed in schools, it is Black kids who are disproportionately dropping-out, it is housing communities with large concentrations of Black residents where the sense of vulnerability and disadvantage is most acute, it is Black employees, professional and non-professional, on whom the doors of upward equity slam shut. Just as the soothing balm of 'multiculturalism' cannot mask racism, so racism cannot mask its primary target.

It is important, I believe, to acknowledge not only that racism is pervasive, but that at different times in different places, it violates certain minority communities more than others. As one member of the Urban Alliance on Race Relations said: "The Blacks are out front, and we're all lined up behind".

Second, most of my meetings were astonishingly frank and helpful. They were also suffused with intensity. There is a great deal of anger, anxiety, frustration and impatience amongst those with whom I talked in the visible minority communities. They don't understand why it takes forever to fashion and implement race relations policies. Often during our discussions, there was a weary and bitter sense that I was engaged and they were engaged in yet another reporting charade. It was truly depressing. And it means, I think, that government initiatives must come soon, and they must be pretty fundamental.

Third, there was another emotion that was palpable, and it was fear. Mostly, of course, it was from members of the Black community, and in particular, mothers. The eight shootings over the last four years, and the sense, real or imagined, of unpredictable police encounters with Black youth has many families very frightened. I will admit to you that nothing left so indelible an impression on me as the expressions of apprehension and fear. I can't even begin to imagine it about my own children. Nor could you. We must find a way out of the present tension because it's intolerable, in this society, to know that, as one woman put it: "Mothers see their sons walk out the door; they never sleep until they see their sons walk back in."

Finally, it was good that this project was only one month long. Everyone I talked to, absolutely everyone, wants to see speedy action on a whole variety of fronts. Naturally, I feel both self-conscious and inadequate about making recommendations on such complex subjects in so short a time. On the other hand,

everything I'm about to suggest flows directly from the intensive consultations of the last few weeks, and in each instance there are several different sources of corroboration. In any event, you will know how to pick and choose and amend in ways which make things possible. Let me, then, turn to specifics.

Part 1: The Criminal Justice System

If ever I've felt two solitudes in life, it's the apparent chasm between the Metropolitan Toronto Police and many representatives of the Black community. And I should make it clear that it's by no means just the Black Action Defense Committee. In fact, much to my surprise, I was told time and time again, that while Dudley Laws' rhetoric might sound outrageous and extreme, the community felt a certain identification with his views. They might never say it publicly, but they wanted me to know it.

A similar, though less pronounced distance echoed in the words I heard from many other racial minority representatives in Toronto, including a strongly-worded brief presented on behalf of the Chinese Canadian National Council. It was all rather discouraging, and it's therefore awfully difficult to know what to do. The police, at least in Metro, from my discussions, appear to be equally adversarial. They feel themselves at risk -- certainly that is true for the leadership with whom I spoke - and determined not to give ground to what they regard as clear patterns of criminality.

None of it makes for harmonious race relations.

On top of that, of course, Metro is not the Province, and anything I recommend should have broad application. The Police have a hugely important job to do, and we all want them to do it. There must surely be a way to combine

constructive policing with public confidence that to serve and protect is not a threat to visible minority communities.

With this background, I'd like to make recommendations which build on the structures already in place.

(a) The Race Relations and Policing Task Force

It seems widely agreed that the work of Clare Lewis and his colleagues was absolutely first-rate. Certainly a good deal of progress has been made on putting into place a number of recommendations. However, that's not uniformly true (take monitoring as an example), and it certainly doesn't hold across all Police Forces. The Task Force originally reported in 1989, and there's a strong perception that implementation of its recommendations has slowed. It may be due to the passage of time; it may be due to resistance; it may be due to budget restraint -- who knows? Whatever the cause, this excellent document cannot be allowed to wither into obscurity. It forms a thoughtful basis for enlightened race relations, and as such, it must be given new life.

I therefore recommend:

"By July 15, 1992, the Race relations and Policing Task Force be reconstituted in the person of Clare Lewis, and any two of his former Task Force members whom he may choose. Their job will be to assess the status of current implementation, the status of recommendations still outstanding, and to suggest precisely how to proceed. Mr. Lewis should be asked to report by October 15, 1992. He should also be at liberty to make further recommendations as appropriate."

(b) A Race Relations Audit for Police Forces

I have been enormously intrigued by a Race Relations audit, currently underway in the Metro Toronto Police Force, conducted by the Metropolitan Toronto Auditor, and due to report next month. It seems to be little known and little understood, but it strikes me as a potentially powerful tool by which to identify unacceptable practices, monitor management performance and introduce important improvements in race relations policies.

The audit was initiated by the Metropolitan Corporation with the necessary approval of the Metro Police Services Board. The opening statement of its terms of reference reads as follows: "The Metropolitan Auditor will conduct an audit of police policies, procedures, programs and practices that impact on racial minorities and the police race relations climate". My report is not the place to go into detail about the audit, but suffice to say that it's my impression that the Metropolitan Auditor is pursuing it rigorously, that information and data are being gathered on a significant number of relevant issues, that many of the right questions are being asked, and that as a first crack at an entirely new undertaking, it will prove fascinating in the result.

There is, however, one crucial limitation. The Auditor openly admits that there is not yet a fully-developed or adequate methodology to deal with race relations. But in the process of this audit, he and his advisors are attempting to fashion just such a methodology. I am persuaded that when the report is tabled, it should be seen as a singular opening to our capacity to monitor the management of race relations issues within the police forces of Ontario.

This will require key initiatives on the part of government. Obviously, not every Municipality will have the capacity to carry out an audit, so within the

Ministry of the Solicitor General, the appropriate branch must be given the resources to conduct audits independently, or to collaborate with municipal auditors to that end. Furthermore, there must be the equivalent of a Community Audit Board. Gone are the days when the racial minority communities can be excluded from such crucial processes. They have to be involved, as must the police, in identifying the police forces to be audited in any given year, refining the methodology, designing the right questions, and commenting on the results.

I therefore recommend:

"By September 1, 1992, A community-based Monitoring and Audit Board be established, to work in conjunction with the Race Relations and Policing Unit of the Ministry of the Solicitor General. In collaboration with police forces and municipalities, a systematic audit of police Race Relations policies be pursued to the extent and in the number that appears reasonable in any given year."

(c) Police Complaints Commissioner

The Office of the Police Complaints Commissioner, so far as I was able to ascertain, seems to be working well, given the limits of a complicated procedure. In saying that, I'm not suggesting that there aren't problems. It's my sense that some of the police management remains skeptical about the operation; others are comfortable. From the public, there is mystification about the actual complaints process, and not a lot of confidence in the police themselves doing the initial investigations.

It is my view that the logic of civilian control will lead, one day, to the Complaints Commissioner receiving all complaints, investigating all complaints, and where a complaint is judged legitimate, identifying a course of action. That time, however, is some years off. In the interim, and as part of an incremental

expansion in the role of the Commissioner, it would seem to me that all race-related complaints should be referred explicitly to the Police Complaints Commissioner for initial investigation. In order to do this job, the Commission will require additional staff and resources.

I recognize that this is a considerable shift in practice from internal police processes to external review. Still, I believe that it will greatly improve the climate of race relations between the police and the visible minority communities, and on those grounds alone it is justified.

I therefore recommend:

"By October 1, 1992, amendments to the Police Services Act be introduced to transfer the initial investigations into complaints of racially discriminatory conduct from the public complaints bureau of a police force to the Police Complaints Commissioner, and require the Police Complaints Commissioner to review the disposition by the chief of police of all such cases."

(d) The Special Investigations Unit

Throughout this month-long review, I have heard incessantly, and critically, of the Special Investigations Unit. People have frequently called for the resignation of Mr. Justice Osler who heads the Unit, and there was rarely a charitable word uttered either about its various findings or its investigative capacity. It is clear that criminal investigation of police conduct is one of the most controversial areas of the Criminal Justice System.

I don't intend to add further acrimony to the debate. My impression, after a lengthy conversation with Judge Osler himself, is that he, as much as anyone, sees

the need for change. I shall therefore simply address the elements of change, and deal with what I perceive to be some of the misconceptions.

The Special Investigations Unit has been underfunded from its inception 22 months ago. The recent infusion of half a million dollars will help, but not sufficiently. The Unit must be permitted to achieve real credibility with both the public and the police -- a credibility it does not now have.

To that end, its capacity to conduct criminal investigations is the crux. Many members of minority communities simply do not believe that the reliance on ex-police officers or the OPP to do investigations of other police officers will work. They yearn for some kind of intensive, let us say three-year training programme during which people of non-police investigative background (for example, from the Ombudsman, or the Human Rights Commission, or the WCB, or the private insurance industry) could develop the sophisticated forensic skills which are required.

I don't agree. Criminal investigation takes years and years of experience to acquire, and in the process of investigation, there is equally the need to be intimately familiar with police culture. Independence must absolutely be assured, but it should be possible to find and attract skilled police criminal investigators of excellence, who would wish to join the Special Investigations Unit because they believe, above all, in a fair, law-abiding and incorruptible police force, and they're prepared to devote their careers to that end.

It will take dollars and tenacity to assemble such a Unit. But it can be done. And to provide a frame of further public confidence, civilian employees, of unblemished reputation with some non-criminal investigative background, should round out the Unit, and be a part of each investigation.

It may well be that a judge is not the right person, by experience or temperament, to head such a Unit. It's hard to say. But on balance, someone of more aggressive prosecutorial disposition might be best.

I therefore recommend:

"By October 1, 1992, the Special Investigations Unit should be removed from the aegis of the Ministry of the Solicitor General, and be re-fashioned as an arms-length agency reporting to the Attorney General. It must have adequate funding to ensure a totally independent investigative capacity, and the achievement of that capacity should be the focus of its work in the immediate future."

I have one additional thought within this section which need not be phrased as a recommendation. A limited number of groups also raised with me what they saw as the inadequacy of the Office of the Director of Criminal Prosecutions, in the Ministry of the Attorney General, whose role it is to prosecute "significant" wrongdoing within the Administration of Justice. It is this Branch, for example, which will begin this month prosecuting cases where the investigation has been done by the SIU. It has been suggested that high profile cases, like those which involve police shootings, should in fact be handled by notable members of the Criminal Defence bar.

Again I don't agree. If the present Criminal Prosecutor's unit is adequately funded, and the definition of its jurisdiction more carefully worked out, there is no reason to believe that the Office of Criminal Prosecutions can't do the job. On the contrary, it can and it should. Ministries are created to serve the public interest; we should work from the assumption that they can be made to do so.

(e) Use of Force

This is not an elaborate section. Everyone is aware that the Solicitor General will be introducing, in the immediate future, and subject to public consultation, a proposal on the use of force. I merely want to underscore how vital and urgent this particular amendment to the regulations under the Police Services Act will be.

There seems to be an important consensus developing that police officers need much clearer guidelines about the use of force, alternatives to lethal force, the filing of a report whenever guns are drawn or used, and of course the immediate need for the Federal government to amend the "fleeing felon" provision of the Criminal Code.

The only aspect which seems to prompt agitated controversy is the report filing requirement. I am hard-pressed to understand why. Some police jurisdictions in Ontario already file such reports, with no apparent problems. I would hope that past practice for some could become common practice for all.

It is worth noting that the recent report on the use of force, received by the Metro Toronto Police Services Board, simply gives expression to the growing sense, amongst both police and public, that it's time to move forward on this matter.

I therefore recommend:

"By September 1, 1992, the Ontario government complete the public consultation process, and have definitively in place its amendment to the Police Services Act Regulations regarding the use of force."

(f) Training

On this issue, I experienced total bewilderment. One would have thought, given all the previous reports over the years, and the dramatic changes in the composition of Ontario's society, that race relations training would be a kind of holy writ, integrated into all the police training programs, whether new recruits or long-time officers. It's simply not the case. And there's no excuse for it. None.

I was assured, repetitively and with feeling, by people deeply involved, that training programs are still grossly deficient in their multicultural and anti-racism components. It's worth remembering that the Clare Lewis Task Force was so concerned about the state of training that it suggested a moratorium on existing training practices, during which time new policies could be developed. That was done, and the mandate of the Race Relations and Policing branch, deeply involved in training programs, has just been extended for another three years ... although there is a painful irony in the fact that the extension was accompanied by budget cuts.

A surprising number of people, including Chiefs of Police, emphasized the need for improved training programs -- indeed, not just in the realm of race relations, but aspects that bear directly upon it, like training in the use of fire-arms. On one occasion, a senior member of the Metro Toronto Police Association put to me strongly, and with considerable personal intensity, that police officers can find themselves in invidious and dangerous situations in the handling of guns for which the training has simply been inadequate.

I emerged with the overall impression that generic race relations issues were still being treated in capricious, highly legalistic, episodic fashion within the police training programs of Ontario. There exists, for example, a wonderfully creative

interactive laser video (I was able to screen it), integrating race relations with all other aspects of policing, meticulously prepared and fully tested, with valuable comment from the community and from police officers all over the Province before it was completed, and it is barely in use anywhere. Something is profoundly wrong.

The situation, it seems to me, is grossly unfair to the police and to new recruits in particular. We have a society of immense diversity, with a complex proliferation of multiracial and multicultural sensibilities, and we don't prepare our police for dealing with it. These are areas where the exercise of judgement, and the development of skills for conflict resolution become every bit as important as the grasp of sophisticated technology. If we really believe in investing in our justice system, then the people who are on the front-lines deserve the best training possible. It is ultimately a test of management. The management of a police force in the 1990's requires qualitative shifts in training, and without those shifts, things go wrong.

I must admit that I wouldn't know how to respond to the training miasma were it not for some splendid work, just about to be published, prepared by the Strategic Planning Committee on Police Training and Education. It's an initiative led by the Solicitor General's Ministry, and if the contents are accepted and implemented, it would dramatically improve the training of recruits at Police Colleges, and establish a program of life-long learning for police officers.

I therefore recommend:

"By November 1, 1992, the government of Ontario establish an Ontario Police Training, Education and Development Board, with broad police and community representation, whose responsibility it would be to implement the recommendations of the Strategic Planning Committee on Police Training and Education. As a matter of urgency, those recommendations which focus on race relations should be given priority."

(g) An Inquiry or Review

This part is difficult. As you know, when we first talked, we both shied away from a formal Inquiry because it was hard to imagine that visible minority communities would have the slightest patience for it. There have been so many inquiries and reports, with so many recommendations repeated ad nauseam, that another tortured examination of the obvious wouldn't wash. The idea was to try to bring things up-to-date over the course of a month, and suggest action.

I've tried to do that. And the rest of the report will continue to mirror it. But in the course of listening carefully to what people said about the criminal justice system, I began to realize that most of what has gone before reflects a curious distortion: nearly everything focusses on the police. We actually know very little about race relations and the courts, or the Crowns, or the laying of charges, or the granting of bail, or plea bargaining or parole or the judges or the vexing question of racially-based statistical data or, above all, correctional institutions.

During the last few weeks, I've heard enough expressions of concern, and enough anecdotal horror stories about alleged racist episodes that it's clear that we have to correct the balance. I'm therefore persuaded that we should establish some sort of Panel of Inquiry or Review, with broad terms of reference, to examine those parts of the Justice System which cry out for assessment and evaluation, but always seem to escape it.

There are, however, a number of conditions.

First, the idea of a review is only sustainable if the earlier recommendations contained in this report are acted upon with dispatch.

Second, no particular part of the system should be treated with kid gloves. I'm thinking especially of the Judiciary. I'm prepared to bet that race relations training for judges, where it exists at all, is pretty elemental. I say that because I have some personal knowledge of gender training for judges, and please believe me, that training leaves a lot to be desired. Like everyone else, I embrace the principle of an independent Judiciary, but judges are mortal, and most mortals need help.

Third, Corrections really worries me. Time and again I was told of the disproportionate numbers of minority youth in detention centres, of the abuse gratuitously heaped upon them, of the woeful lack of "rehabilitation" opportunities or any assistance at the point of discharge. I don't know what's real or what's not. I know only that people, knowledgeable and involved, paint a distressing picture.

Fourth, any such Inquiry or Review must report within a tight time-frame so that there will be opportunity to act well within the life of your present mandate.

Fifth, the striking of a Panel of, say, five or seven members should allow for majority representation from visible minority communities.

Sixth, considerations of employment equity and representativeness, developing a criminal justice system which reflects the composition of the greater society can also be within the terms of reference.

Seventh, if policing is to be touched upon, and it is probably inescapable, then there is one profoundly positive dimension to be addressed: community policing. There is now a number of reports, Federal, Provincial and Municipal which deal

with community policing, but as I learned, even in the period of one short month, the phrase has an infinite number of meanings and interpretations. Community policing, in the fullest sense -- that is, police and community working cooperatively together -- may be the best way to adapt to a multicultural and multiracial society. Instead of the police becoming the flash-point for racial tension, we develop a management approach and a police force which is an organic extension of the community they serve.

I therefore recommend:

"By September 1, 1992, there be established an Inquiry into race relations and the criminal justice system, with broad terms of reference, incorporating Crown Attorneys, Courts Administration, the Judiciary, Adult and Youth correctional facilities, Community Policing, probation and parole services and all relevant particulars which the government considers germane.

By January 1, 1993, an interim report should be tabled which deals exclusively with Correctional facilities. The final report would be due July 1, 1993."

Yet again, I have a nagging addendum. During the course of this last month, I learned that a grant from the Ministry of Citizenship to the Ministry of Correctional Services, for the express purpose of aiding inmates in the corrections system, in part through ethno-specific counselling, had been cancelled. It has not been picked up in full by Correctional Services. I urge that be done immediately as a sign of the government's good faith.

As a matter of fact, I have many nagging worries about the Ministry of Correctional Services. I'm inclined to think that the Inquiry provisions, which deal with Corrections, should be the most searching and comprehensive of all.

Part 2: Employment Equity

This is a quite straightforward section of my report. There was not a single meeting that I can remember where employment equity did not arise. To my surprise, and perhaps naivete, employment equity is a kind of cause celebre for visible minority communities everywhere. They see it as the consummate affirmation of opportunity and access. With the possible exception of education, nothing is so important.

Somewhat anxiously, therefore, I have to tell you that there is great concern about the progress of the government's intended employment equity legislation. It can't be introduced soon enough. And there may be no other explicit legislative initiative which will mean so much to establishing a positive climate of race relations in the minds of every single minority grouping: Black, South Asian, East Asian, Chinese, --- it matters not, public and private sector alike.

In the public sector, however, the concern mentioned above, turns to acute anxiety. If one accepts the argument -- and I do -- that the Ontario Public Service (OPS) must set the example for everyone else, then we have a problem on our hands.

As you know, we've had an employment equity program and an accelerated employment equity program in place in the OPS since 1987. Despite various tough injunctions, and supposed vigorous follow-up, the results are truly disappointing for the racial minority designated group (as it is for disabled people and aboriginal peoples as well). If you will forgive the acerbic quality of this comment, the program over the last five years reminds me uncomfortably of the Federal government employment equity legislation: the gains are marginal at best.

It's particularly true -- isn't it ever thus? -- in the case of senior management. As I understand it, there are roughly 2,000 such positions in the OPS, and visible minority persons are largely excluded. In fact, in a very recent internal survey of employment equity in the OPS, the following categorical quotes appear: "All Designated Groups are under-represented in Senior Management" ... "Racial Minorities experience a glass ceiling at Senior Management 1" ... "Racial minority men and women experience occupational segregation which limits their upward mobility" ... "The majority of Senior Management positions are located in ministries where designated groups are significantly under-represented in senior ranks"... etc.

It is no wonder then that in my meetings with civil servants of visible minority background, especially Black civil servants, there was huge skepticism about the resolve of the bureaucratic leadership of the OPS to implement employment equity. In considerable measure, that skepticism was focussed on Management Board. In fact, to be blunt, there's a real crisis of faith. I'd go so far as to suggest that once the legislation is introduced, you might consider gathering the entire Deputy Minister cadre together, and make it clear that the days of inertia are over. I leave to you the extent to which you might further want to make employment equity an integral part of performance evaluation.

If the right atmosphere can be created, right from the outset within the Ontario Public Service, then Ms Juanita Westmoreland-Traore, as Employment Equity Commissioner, can far more easily carry the message to the broader public and private sectors.

And one more observation: The same standards that we apply to the OPS must surely be applied to the political staff of the Ministries, in every job category.

I'm worried that there has been a tendency to take things for granted within the political staff, and that it's time to take a tough look at where things now stand.

I therefore recommend:

"The Employment Equity legislation should be introduced for first reading before the end of June, and if the session is for some reason prolonged, second reading should proceed. Whatever the time-table for early readings and committee consideration, the Bill should be passed by December 31, 1992, to take effect as early as possible in 1993. Furthermore, the most senior levels of the OPS should be mobilized to ensure rigorous implementation."

Part 3: Education

In every undertaking of this kind, there are memorable moments, and with the exception of the emotional responses to the criminal justice system, such moments occurred primarily within the realm of education.

One of them allows me to raise what may be the most perplexing issue of all.

Apparently, in the wake of the rioting in Los Angeles and Toronto, students in every High School in the Toronto Board of Education, had a discussion of the meaning of those incendiary events. This happened, I judge, in most schools throughout Metro, and quite possibly the province. Indeed, in the case of North York, as I recall, the Director of the Board of Education circulated a thoroughly thoughtful and intelligent letter to all of the Principals in the system, acknowledging the reality of systemic racism, and urging the schools to use the public events as a way of discussing difficult issues.

In any event, as I understand it, in Toronto, after things had been debated in the various schools, about one hundred students came together at a Conference to make recommendations to the teachers and the Board. Those recommendations were subsequently conveyed to me by the Chair of the Toronto Board of Education at a meeting which I held with representatives of all the Boards in Metro, Peel and Peel-Dufferin.

The long and the short of it is that when you read those recommendations, it's as if virtually nothing has changed for visible minority kids in the school system over the last ten years. I have to admit that it stopped me in my tracks because I know that the Toronto Board, of all the Boards, has made an herculean effort to get the schools to be responsive to the startling multiracial and multicultural changes in the community.

Undoubtedly, some progress has been made. But often, as I listened to students of all ages and all backgrounds speak out at the many gatherings we had, it was as though we were back to square one. The lack of real progress is shocking. And I believe it signals the most intractable dilemma, around race relations, in contemporary education: How do you get the best of policies and programs into the individual classrooms? It raises searching questions of communications and accountability.

Everywhere, the refrain of the Toronto students, however starkly amended by different schools and different locations, was essentially the refrain of all students. Where are the courses in Black history? Where are the visible minority teachers? Why are there so few role models? Why do our white guidance counsellors know so little of different cultural backgrounds? Why are racist incidents and epithets tolerated? Why are there double standards of discipline? Why are minority students streamed? Why do they discourage us from University? Where are we going to find

jobs? What's the use of having an education if there's no employment? How long does it take to change the curriculum so that we're a part of it?

The students were fiercely articulate and often deeply moving. Sometimes angry. They don't understand why the schools are so slow to reflect the broader society. One bright young man in a Metro east high school said that he had reached grade thirteen, without once having a book by a black author on the curriculum. And when other students, in the large meeting of which he was a part, started to name the books they had been given to read, the titles were "Black Like Me" and "To Kill A Mockingbird" (both, incredibly enough, by white writers!). It's absurd in a world which has a positive cornucopia of magnificent literature by black authors. I further recall an animated young woman from a high school in Peel, who described her school as overwhelmingly multiracial, and then added that she and her fellow students had white teachers, white counsellors, a white principal, and were taught black history by a white teacher who didn't like them. There wasn't a single non-white member of the staff.

And then there was a Black participant, who rose shyly from the audience to say that he was a teacher and that his most touching experience came on his first day on the job, when a group of Black youngsters approached him, solemnly shook his hand, and said, "Thank Goodness. A Black teacher at last."

I recite these things not to be maudlin, but to try to convey what's out there. We're still struggling to maintain English as a Second Language (ESL) and French as a Second Language (FSL) programs. Some students have neither English nor French as their first language: take the large number of newly-arrived Somali children in both Toronto and Ottawa. And what about the Black youngsters who are Francophone? How do they contend with racism? How do the schools handle it?

The world has changed, and try as it may, education's having a tough time changing with it. It makes, I think, the announcement by Tony Silipo of an Assistant Deputy Minister to handle, amongst other imperatives, multiculturalism and anti-racism in the schools, absolutely fundamental. The sooner we get the mandatory provisions of Bill 21 through the Legislature, the better. Every single School Board must put elaborate policies in place, but the crucial thing is to monitor the performance of superintendents and principals and individual teachers. And if the performance evaluation falls short, then action will have to be taken.

There are so many enigmas, so many contradictions. When I met with representatives of School Boards, they would say how much they wanted to hire visible minority teachers, even in a time of restraint. But there were few or none available, and everybody was vying for the same person. And then we'd be in Ottawa, or Windsor, and at a meeting a black woman would stand to say that she had graduated from a Faculty of Education and could never get anything other than supply teaching. I don't know how to reconcile it; there wasn't enough time. But it must be pursued.

Certainly what is happening at Faculties of Education is real cause for concern. Here I think I can talk with greater confidence. Chairs and Directors of Boards alike raised the difficulty they've been having in getting the Faculties of Education to broaden their intake, to make their classes (and their courses) far more representative of the community. I was delighted to hear of initiatives underway between area Boards of Education and the Faculties of Education at York and U of T, to respond to these concerns, and encourage the admission of more visible minority candidates. It's being done under the rubric of something called "urban education", and while, having read the documents, I'm not really persuaded that it's enough, it is a start.

At the University of Ottawa, there is a parallel effort to broaden the intake, again a step in the right direction based upon "self-identification" of the candidates, so that more racial minority applicants can be brought in, but it, too, is only a step. I'm reminded, sourly, of a comment made by a Director of a Board of Education in Metro, who observed that hiring night at the Faculties in 1992 is not much different in composition from 1960's and 70's.

What we have here is the opening foray into affirmative action. What makes me want to pinch myself is that it's 1992 for heaven's sake, why did it take so long? Why are there still Faculties of Education out there that rely on marks alone, that won't provide educational upgrading, or transitional help, prior learning assessment or simple employment equity in order to make our schools a reflection of our society? We're not talking about lesser applicants. Not at all. We're just talking about opening doors. Some of the Directors of Education with whom I met were considerably agitated about the exclusionary policies of Faculties of Education.

It's worthy of note, I think, that the Teacher Education Council, Ontario, with the support of various Boards of Education, advocates that 9 per cent of admission places in Faculties of Education (to reflect the work-force) be reserved, on a right-of-first-refusal basis, for qualified visible minority candidates, and that they be equally eligible for all other places. That seems to me a good starting-point.

And while we're at questions of institutions of higher learning, perhaps I can add that something has to be done about the representativeness of Boards of Governors, particularly our Universities. It speaks, in part, to the appointments through Government-in-Council over which you have control, and the need to look again at the legislation governing four Universities where there is no provision for cabinet appointments.

