

Ottawa's state-sponsored racism

Official racism will begin in Canada on Sept. 1 when a new federal policy goes into effect forcing companies doing business with Ottawa to hire predefined numbers of women and "visible minorities."

Since the government now consumes 55% of every dollar spent in Canada, many firms will be affected by the latest example of federal social engineering. Leave aside the issues of women and equal pay. Let's focus on the interesting question of what Ottawa terms "visible minorities."

Such people must now be hired according to a formula devised by federal employment officials. Surprise inspections will monitor compliance. Firms failing to meet Ottawa's targets will be given up to Canada's version of the Inquisition, the Human Rights Commission.

To some, all this may sound like a good idea. If so, think for a moment about the law's not-so-obvious implications.

Acme Industries is told that it must hire 12 "visible minority" workers. Who are they? Inuit and racial minorities, says Ottawa, plus other "disadvantaged" groups. So Acme goes out and hires six Inuit, one Chinese, two "Pakistanis" and three "blacks," meeting Ottawa's order for 12 minority workers.

Inspectors come back, check the books and interview minority employees. One of the "blacks," a honey-skinned lady from racially mixed Jamaica, says, no, she is not black but white. One of the "Pakistanis" says he is actually an Indian Brahmin, and thus as white as any European.

Suddenly, Acme is violating federal law. Who then will determine people's race? Why federal

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bureaucrats, of course. No matter that societies in the West Indies, Latin America, Africa and Asia each have a myriad of racial nuances, Ottawa recognizes only black or white, minority or majority.

A new race bureaucracy will, of course, have to be created, probably called the ministry of human relations, staffed with experts from the post office. It will make those terribly difficult decisions about how to classify a half-Nigerian, half-British man. Is he a white or a black — and thus in line for preferential hiring? Will a white man who claims he is black be able to get a job ahead of other people? Is a Chinese from a visible minority? Is an Arab, a Cambodian or a Greek?

Are Americans a visible minority in Canada? Are lesbians and gays a minority that must receive preference? What about the very fat? Right now there is a suit going on in the U.S. charging a firm with discrimination because it refused to hire a 250-lb. woman. What about that great, silent minority: The ugly?

As unemployment in this country grows, such questions will become vitally important to many people. C.X.

Ogilvy, born in Barbados, claims he is black, but looks white. Ottawa's race bureaucrats will have to check his family background for a few generations back. Counting the number of teeth is also a good indication of race, and so, of course, are tests of the hair, skin and blood.

"Dear Mr. Ogilvy: We regret to inform you that our tests indicate you to have more white genes than black, and thus you do not qualify for the minority hiring program."

For those problem people whose race is difficult to determine, there are also more traditional methods. German scientists back in the 1930s and '40s developed many sophisticated tests involving the skull, leg bones, the iris and penis size to determine race. Ottawa race bureaucrats will likely find such seminal works invaluable.

Once racial and sex hiring quotas are extended to all business, as they likely will be, it might be easier for Ottawa to issue identity cards showing a person's racial group. That way, disputes could be easily avoided. After all, it's a small price to pay for stamping out discrimination in the private sector. No South Africans here, by jingo.

"Dear Acme Industries: Our computer shows that Ms. L. Grove, worker number 1-157386, race ID number N-419724-R2, is no longer classified as an Inuit. She is now reclassified as a white, code 34-G5-237. You must dismiss her and hire an overweight (minimum 100 kilo) female Inuit, code group 1-897r72, or face investigation by the Human Rights Commission. Overweight female Inuit must receive the same pay as section G9-12 handicapped transsexuals."