

**Mr. Skelly (Comox-Alberni):** Madam Speaker, just a short question for the speak who just spoke.

One of the problems that we have experienced in Canada is actually institutionalized racism, racism that seems to have the sponsorship of the government.

The concern that I have had over the past little while is the number of petitions and letters I have received, not just from my constituents, but from constituents across Canada with respect to opening the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to members of the Sikh religion and the fact that devout Sikhs cannot serve in the RCMP without wearing the turban and other symbols of their religion. It means that they are barred from serving in the national police force of Canada.

I am wondering what the ministry of the Secretary of State has done in order to make it possible to open the RCMP to devout Sikhs by allowing changes in the uniform allowing Sikhs to wear turbans. There is a necessity for this change to take place. It has been recommended by the senior officers of the RCMP and it is also a necessity to provide adequate policing within the Sikh community itself in Canada. I am wondering what has been done in that respect. I know there is a long delay with the Solicitor General in making a decision. Just what has been in that respect?

**Mrs. Browes:** Madam Speaker, I think the members of the House appreciated the opportunity provided by the Speaker yesterday to meet with members of the Sikh community. We spent about an hour with them. It was very enlightening to all of us and I know the member who just spoke was also at that session.

Members of the Sikh community met yesterday with the Solicitor General. They were very satisfied with the meeting and I understand the Solicitor General told the community at that time that he would be making an early decision on the recommendation from the Commissioner of the RCMP concerning the wearing of turbans. I believe the Solicitor General recognized that the decision has taken some time but he has been consulting with a number of groups across the country.

In relation to the pins and buttons referred to by previous speakers, I want to draw to the attention of members the pin that I saw recently. I hope to get one. Around the edge it shows people of visible minorities holding hands. Around the edge of the pin it says, "Canadians working together". I think that is the mes-

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sage that we, as members of Parliament, want to send out to the people of Canada, that we have people of all visible minorities, every person making up this great wonderful country of Canada holding hands and working together.

**Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth):** Madam Speaker, I listened with a great deal of understanding and pride in what I am hearing in the House today as hon. members get up and speak to this motion.

The hon. member who has just spoken spoke about some new initiatives that the government is undertaking to try to bring about a greater awareness of minority groups, of the differences that we have as Canadians and to try to bring about a better understanding from all Canadians.

There are certain pieces of legislation that are in effect such as the employment equity legislation. Rather than building new structures, does she not agree that perhaps we should go and look at the existing structures, such as the employment equity legislation? It is a very progressive piece of legislation. But it has no compliance mechanism; it has no teeth. It sets about almost a panacea of what we would all like to see. But it is very weak in the compliance section. I would like to get the hon. member's comments on that to see whether or not she believes there are things we can do as parliamentarians in a non-partisan fashion on both sides of this House to ensure that the legislation in effect is as effective as possible.

• (1300)

**Mrs. Browes:** I am really pleased the hon. member asked that question because it is a very progressive piece of legislation. I had an opportunity to sit on that legislative committee when the bill was being discussed.

When we were discussing the legislation, the importance that we put on it was that we wanted results. All parties wanted results. What we wanted was to give the companies which were contracting with the federal government an opportunity to put those affirmative actions of visible minorities, the disabled, within their own structure. We wanted to have that data base of one, two and three years.

We have the second report. The first report was the benchmark, and everything is going to flow from the benchmark report. So it is important that we look at the