

PUNJAB

Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton): Mr. Speaker, following a recent visit to India I wish to inform fellow Canadians of the troubled situation which still exists in the province of Punjab.

While efforts have been made to ease tensions and the death toll is down considerably, the situation unfortunately is still not normal. Police excesses continue. Equally worrisome is the lack of any commitment toward achieving a lasting peace and restoring law and order.

I hope that Canada will encourage the Indian government to accept independent international human rights groups to visit the Punjab.

I also hope that the Indian government will take concrete steps to engage in dialogue with representatives of various political groups to achieve a peaceful solution.

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WORLD HABITAT DAY

Ms. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore): Mr. Speaker, I wish to bring to the attention of the House that Monday, October 3 is World Habitat Day. In this International Year of the Family the celebration of World Habitat Day by the United Nations is even more significant.

It is important to recognize that more and more families around the world are living in substandard housing conditions. The need for adequate shelter is not only a basic human right but necessary for the well-being of all world citizens.

As members of this House, we can facilitate the promotion of public awareness about housing by celebrating World Habitat Day in our individual ridings.

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[Translation]

1992 REFERENDUM

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères): Mr. Speaker, Bloc Quebecois members were relieved to learn last night that the federal government had finally agreed to compensate the Government of Quebec for its 1992 referendum expenses.

We have lost track of the number of questions the Official Opposition asked since January as to whether the present Prime Minister intended to keep the promise made by his predecessor. The sovereigntist members have succeeded in shaking this government out of its malevolent torpor concerning Quebec issues.

We might add that there is a phantom looming behind the whole story. While the Bloc members had been pressuring the

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government for a week, the member for Sherbrooke waited until the very last minute to inform the House that, as far as he was aware, the former Prime Minister had made a solemn pledge a long time ago.

I dare ask the phantom of the House: "Where have you been for the past 18 months, since March 1993?"

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[English]

NATIONAL UNITY

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, several months ago our party submitted 20 very specific questions to the Prime Minister concerning what action his government planned to take on the issue of Canadian unity. To date the Prime Minister has failed to respond to any of these questions.

Obviously the Prime Minister is subtly continuing his do nothing policy, or more likely just does not have the answers. If the latter is indeed true, may we suggest that the Prime Minister do like other concerned Canadians and tune into his local cable channel on Monday, October 3 for Reform's national unity electronic town hall meeting.

During the show Canadians will have the opportunity to answer three direction questions on the future of Canada. This historic event will give Canadians an opportunity to express their views on this important issue. It will give the Prime Minister an opportunity to see that his do nothing policy is not acceptable to Canadians.

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MERCHANT NAVY

Mr. John Richardson (Perth—Wellington—Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to bring attention to and salute the great veterans of our merchant navy, the merchant seamen.

This great country of ours, Canada, has always recognized the contribution of our citizens in time of war and has given just compensation for services rendered.

During the war, the merchant navy served under some of the most dangerous conditions and hostile weather. However they have not been fully recognized for their role in the war.

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These veterans have not been provided with the status due to them and promised to them. While our country was generous enough to compensate Japanese Canadians who were interned during the war, we have turned our backs on these brave members of the merchant navy. They have even been denied their former part in placing a wreath in remembrance at the National War Memorial this year.