

*Private Members' Business*

too must the composition of the police force which serves that society. The need to provide more effective community-based policing is clearly not a concern facing the RCMP alone but must most established Canadian symbols be altered to achieve this goal? I do not deny that the RCMP uniform has changed over the years. However, the change did not interfere with uniformity nor did the change reflect any religious affiliation.

The issue being debated today is not a simple one but one that has far reaching implications. It is clearly a desirable goal to have the RCMP open to all who wish to serve in it. I do not believe anyone involved in this debate would argue to the contrary.

Lately in this country we have been moving in the direction of separating religion from state. Would this not be a step back from this position? At the same time, it is recognized that policing in general is a profession which has a different code of conduct, standards and dress than other disciplines. Coupled with the particular history of the red serge Mountie uniform, there are arguments to be considered against modification.

Somehow a solution must be found. The outcome of a decision on this issue must produce a win-win situation for all concerned, but must Canadian symbols give way? This is why the matter is being reviewed carefully and why further consultation is necessary.

**Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West):** Mr. Speaker, I have a very special and personal reason for entering this debate today. My father was an immigrant to this country. He brought with him a strange language and some different customs and, until his retirement, he was master tailor for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. For over three decades, he dedicated his life and his career to making sure that the Mounted Police was the best dressed national police force in the world. He took great pride in personally measuring every new recruit for his first uniform and even had the honour of making a Mountie suit which was sent back to England with Queen Elizabeth II for Prince Charles. I know because my younger brother was the model for it.

I share the view that I believe my father would have had, that we should be grateful to live in a nation that would not force any Canadian to abandon an important element of his or her religion, and that would not

exclude any Canadian from being a member of the RCMP for religious reasons.

The Mounted Police is a symbol of Canada because they uphold the values that make this a great country, values that include respect for the differences that exist among Canadians, and values that include the right we all enjoy to participate fully in Canadian society regardless of differences in religion, race, gender or colour.

I have no doubt that there were also objections when some uniforms first included skirts. There are no doubt some people who feel that oriental skins or black skins or native Canadian skins do not go with—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member. The hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway on a point of order.

**Mr. Robinson:** Mr. Speaker, having regard to the clock and not wanting to stop the hon. member, I would seek consent of the House to extend the debate so that speeches may be finished.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** When the member for Burnaby—Kingsway asks to extend the debate, I would ask him to what time. The member knows that if we do not see the clock, we could be here until Monday morning. It is not that I object, but I would just like some indication from the member.

**Mr. Robinson:** I would suggest that we allow the speakers who wish to participate to do so—I understand there are very few who wish to do so—and that the debate be continued no later than 3.30 p.m.

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Some Hon. Members:** No.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** There is no unanimous consent. The member for Ottawa West.

**Mrs. Catterall:** The integrity and excellence of the force does not depend on such superficial considerations as a piece of serge or a piece of brown felt. A multiculturalism department and policy are travesties if our institutions cannot change to accommodate differences.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Denis Pronovost (Saint-Maurice):** Mr. Speaker, the issue of the proposed changes in the uniform of the RCMP which the Hon. Member for Burnaby—Kingsway has asked the House to examine should be considered within the broader context of providing police services in a multicultural society. The RCMP's decision to allow the wearing of turbans by members of the RCMP is a delicate matter that obliges us to strike a balance