

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, March 15, 1990

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

TABLING OF 1988-89 ANNUAL REPORT

Hon. Marcel Danis (Minister of State (Youth) and Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, on behalf of my colleague, the Minister for External Relations, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 1988-89 annual report for CIDA.

* * *

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to several petitions.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

* * *

[*Translation*]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

WEARING OF DISTINCTIVE UNIFORM

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Solicitor General of Canada): Madam Speaker, I said shortly after my appointment as Solicitor General that I would be examining as a priority

possible modifications to RCMP regulations governing the wearing of the Force's distinctive, or red tunic, uniform.

I again said in the Commons last Friday that I was reviewing this complex issue and that I would be making an early decision when I had verified the facts.

[*English*]

Madam Speaker, today I wish to inform the House that I have completed my study of this issue and am now responding to the recommendation of the RCMP Commissioner to amend the RCMP regulations governing the wearing of the red tunic uniform.

First, the amended regulations under the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act will state that female members will now wear the same red tunic uniform as male members of the force. The design of this uniform will remain the same.

A second amendment permits the Commissioner to exempt individual RCMP members from wearing items of the force's official uniform on the basis of the member's religious beliefs.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Cadieux: The modifications to the regulations to accommodate religious beliefs squares with Canadian human rights legislation and reflects this government's strong commitment to a multicultural society.

[*Translation*]

But the changes will also encourage Canadians from visible minorities to seek a career in our national police force so that it reflects more clearly Canada's varied ethnic and cultural composition.

[*English*]

Debate about RCMP uniforms has been comprehensive, intense and lengthy. Many strongly held and strongly expressed views had to be considered before a decision was possible. A decision has now been taken. I believe that the decision is not only correct in law but that it is also the right decision to make.