

*Private Members' Business*

As my friends on both sides of the House have repeatedly pointed out, we have a custodial responsibility, not just to future generations of Canadians, but to those throughout the world. It has been said—and I said it in my earlier remarks during second reading—that over the last 10 years the area that was populated with trees has declined on a global scale from 25 per cent to just over 20 per cent. If we allow these trends to continue, our own children would experience a complete depletion of the world's forests. Without forests the planet cannot be sustained and certainly life on the planet could not be sustained.

We have a custodial responsibility to the rest of the world to manage those assets which we claim as ours, claiming sovereignty over an area which is the world's second largest with the assets that we have. We have one-fifth of the world's fresh water, which our forests help to cleanse and replenish.

• (1400 )

In conclusion, I would just like to say once again, thank you for the co-operation that we have received and thank you to many of the stakeholders in the forest community throughout the country for allowing us to take this important initial step to redefine the role of the federal government and give me an opportunity to exercise the leadership that the Prime Minister has mandated me to exercise through our country to reaffirm the concept and the spirit of the idea of sustainable development to ensure that our forests are able to meet the needs of the present generation without compromise to the future.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** It being two o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

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**PRIVATE MEMBERS'  
BUSINESS—MOTIONS**

[English]

**ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE**

**DRESS CODE**

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway)** moved:

That this House express its support for the decision of the Commissioner of the RCMP to revise the Force's dress code to allow Canadian Officers of Sikh origin to wear turbans, to more fully reflect the multicultural reality of Canadian society.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise at this time to speak on this very important motion at a particularly significant time for the discussion of this question.

I want to just again read out the terms of the motion before the House. The motion reads:

That this House express its support for the decision of the Commissioner of the RCMP to revise the Force's dress code to allow Canadian Officers of Sikh origin to wear turbans, to more fully reflect the multicultural reality of Canadian society.

I want to emphasize that this motion in fact supports a decision that was made many, many months ago, some 18 months ago in fact, by the Commissioner of the RCMP, a decision which has not yet been implemented by the minister responsible, the Solicitor General.

I want to as well take this opportunity to emphasize the hard work of all of my colleagues on this issue and to single out in particular a number of those colleagues who, hopefully, will have an opportunity to participate in this debate and who have asked that their support be acknowledged. They include the member for Surrey North who in fact made a statement in this House some weeks ago urging the minister to act; my colleague, the member for Vancouver East, our spokesperson on multiculturalism, who I am hoping will participate in the debate; my colleague from Kootenay West—Revelstoke; my colleague, the spokesperson on the ministry of the Solicitor General, the hon. member for Victoria; and many others. Indeed I speak, I say with confidence, on behalf of all of my colleagues in the New Democratic Party in supporting this very important motion.

Earlier today my colleague from Victoria questioned the Minister of Justice as to when he would finally move on this important issue. The Minister of Justice indicated that the Solicitor General was studying the issue, that he would be consulting and that there would be a decision in what he called the very near future. Last June the Solicitor General said that he was "in a consultation process with my caucus and everybody." In September he said he was "still consulting".