

S. O. 31

Completed in 1832 to give access to the Great Lakes from the nation's capital, the canal today offers 202 kilometres of clear, pristine waters through a total of 47 locks. Hundreds of pleasure craft annually move leisurely along through the canal and pages and pages of Canada's history.

As the holiday season starts in Canada in a few weeks I encourage Canadian boaters who are looking for a relaxing holiday to try travelling the Rideau this summer. It is not a fast way to get to Kingston from the capital, but it is one which will take them through a beautiful part of Canada and one they will always remember.

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#### ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION

**Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday Royal Canadian Legion members voted against allowing turbaned Sikh veterans and Jewish veterans to enter legion halls. I applaud the resignation of Dominion Command Chairman Robert Ford over the issue.

Turbans are not hats; they are very important religious symbols of the Sikh faith. Sikh soldiers fought and died wearing their turbans. Therefore Sikh veterans and Jewish veterans should be allowed equal access to Canadian legion halls to honour their fallen comrades.

Yesterday was a sad day for religious tolerance and racial understanding in Canada.

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#### NATIONAL ACCESS AWARENESS WEEK

**Mr. David Iftody (Provencher):** Mr. Speaker, this week marks the seventh anniversary of National Access Awareness Week in Canada.

It is important as legislators in the House to be aware of the needs of the disabled community. When planning community events we must support the establishments that are accessible so that handicapped people can be included.

Inclusion is what National Access Awareness Week is all about: from the ramps to Braille, to traffic lights that alert the blind, to the sign language interpreter who covers question period on the parliamentary channel. We must as legislators always be responsible and aware of the needs and concerns of those who have special requirements, for without those tools we shut out a significant part of our citizenry.

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● (1410)

[Translation]

#### THE LATE REINE JOHNSON

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Reine Johnson passed away yesterday in Montreal. As the wife of one Quebec premier and the mother of two

others, she was the heart and soul of a family that has made a major contribution to politics. Widowed in 1968 upon the death, while in office, of Premier Daniel Johnson Sr., she saw admirably to the education of her two daughters, Diane and Marie, and her two sons, Pierre-Marc and Daniel to whom she passed on the torch of public commitment.

On the death of this great lady whom I had the honour of meeting, how can we not have a moment's thought for the spouses of those who enter the political arena. Every day, they play a vitally important role behind the scenes. They share the trials and experience the harsh blows of political battles, but very rarely do they get the credit they deserve.

Speaking personally and on behalf of the members of the Bloc Québécois, I want to extend my heartfelt condolences to the current Premier of Quebec, Mr. Daniel Johnson, to my friend Pierre-Marc, and to their sisters, Diane and Marie.

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[English]

#### ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION

**Mrs. Sharon Hayes (Port Moody—Coquitlam):** Mr. Speaker, this morning's news carried reports of the Royal Canadian Legion rejecting the proposal to allow turbans. Of the several commentaries I have heard, most condemn this action and once again we hear divisive accusations being hurled by each side.

As a member of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration I have spent many days now listening to the varying opinions of experts and non-experts alike. What is our mandate as we review the Citizenship Act? Indeed, what is the mandate of every Canadian citizen as they identify with Canada?

The strength of our country lies in the agreement of all citizens to come together. That is, we ask no citizen to forsake their cultural inheritance but that each accept and give equal value to the cultural freedom of others.

The legion controversy is two sided. No matter what their cultural or religious background, all Canadians should be confident that their values are respected by others.

In this month of the 50th anniversary of the supremely noble sacrifice by many Canadians, let us recognize the freedom to identify and maintain our respective traditions.

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[Translation]

#### THE LATE REINE JOHNSON

**Mr. Martin Cauchon (Outremont):** Mr. Speaker, with great regret I mention the passing of Reine Gagné-Johnson, who died yesterday after a long illness. Her contribution to political life is important, since she was the wife of a Quebec Premier and the mother of two Quebec Premiers, including the present one, the Hon. Daniel Johnson. We remember her as a lady of great dignity.