

SIKH ORGANIZATIONS

MINISTER'S LETTER TO PREMIERS

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Secretary of State for External Affairs my question is for the Prime Minister and it concerns the letter of the Secretary of State to some Premiers advocating the boycotting of three Canadian Sikh organizations.

Given that the Government is arguing that Canadian citizens belonging to these three Canadian groups be ignored by our political institutions and given that this action has seriously tarnished the community's reputation, I ask the Prime Minister how the Government can blanket the entire Sikh community with collective guilt? Will the Prime Minister now justify under what authority and for what reasons the Government is promoting the denial to certain Canadians of the enjoyment of the full right of citizenship in this country?

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I should point out that the letter sent by the Secretary of State for External Affairs made it very clear that most Sikhs, by far, are good Canadian citizens and do not engage in this kind of activity, but he felt it necessary, in his role as Secretary of State for External Affairs, to bring to the Premiers' attention activities by three groups which he felt were not in the national interest. That was his role and that is how he executed it.

REQUEST THAT MINISTER'S LETTER BE TABLED

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, the Minister surely knows the burden of stigma that this community will have to carry and must overcome as a result of this questionable government action. She now has the opportunity and indeed the obligation to clarify and set the record straight.

If it is not the Prime Minister who will answer, I ask the Minister again, will she explain on behalf of her colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the precise rationale for the Government's position which was communicated only to some Premiers? Will she table the letter and all relevant information so that this House, which has been kept in the dark to date, may come to understand fully both the domestic and the foreign reasons underlying the Government's action?

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, this Government does not agree with the promotion of violence within this country. The Secretary of State made that clear in the letter he sent the Premiers. I would be glad to table the letters to the Premiers at the first opportunity.

Oral Questions

SPORTS

BEST EVER PROGRAM—FUNDING OF OLYMPIC SPORTS

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare in the absence of the Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport. As Canadians celebrate in the afterglow of the Calgary Olympics, they are asking themselves how we are preparing for 1992 and beyond. Will the Government continue to fund the existing Winter Olympic sports at the same or greater levels as the Best Ever Program so that our Canadian team can build on the momentum of our growth at the 1988 Calgary Olympics?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I think everyone in the House would want to commend not only the City of Calgary and the many volunteers who contributed to the XV Winter Olympic Games, but I think people would especially like to congratulate the Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport for the role he has played.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Epp (Provencher): I am sure the—does the Hon. Member disagree with that?

Mr. Marchi: A gold medal for the number of press conferences.

Mr. Epp (Provencher): He should have received a gold medal, and I am sure the House would like to present him with one at the appropriate time.

The Hon. Member will know that the Minister has indicated that he will be making a statement in respect to the Best Ever Program for the 1992 Winter Games. I cannot add any more to that. The Minister will make the statement at the appropriate time.

REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL MONEY FOR ATHLETES

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, given that 40 per cent of the members of the current Canadian team list their occupations as full-time athletes, will the Minister speak to his colleague to ensure that Canadian athletes receive much more than the \$650 per month athletes like Karen Percy, Elizabeth Manley and Gaetan Boucher currently receive for their cost of living? I think it is a shame that Canadians are only paid that much to compete for our country.

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member should be reminded of the words the Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport has used. The Government has contributed and will continue to contribute, but it is not a system whereby the Government fully pays the athletes. Their families have made sacrifices as well, and I think that will continue. For the Hon. Member, one