

Government  
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## MEMORANDUM

## NOTE DE SERVICE

N.C.O. i/c Quesnel Detachment

O.I.C. Campbell River Detachment

Security Classification - Classification de sécurité

Our File - Notre référence

1511-30

Your File - Votre référence

Date March 24, 1993

Multicultural Week - Robron Secondary

Thank you again for allowing Cst. DHILLON time from your schedule to attend Campbell River.

His presence at Robron Secondary for the day certainly left a positive impact on the staff and students.

The writer was present for one of his presentations. The students and staff were captivated, and the following interaction was very positive. Cst. DHILLON portrayed a positive role model not only for the students from the East Indian Community, but the whole student body.

The media was present, and I have included copies from the local press. The local T.V. station videotaped Cst. DHILLON during one of his presentations and broadcast it on the community channel.

Although Cst. DHILLON visited one school, his presence was felt by the community.

(E.I. SALMINEN) Insp.  
OIC Campbell River Detachment

(D.R. HANDLEY) Cst.  
CP/VS Coordinator

ENCL:

93-3-29

Cst. Dhillon

Attached memo of  
appreciation - Copy to your  
service file.

# Editorial Page

## *Heed Cst. Dhillon's poignant message*

**R**obron Secondary students received a lesson in courage last week listening to the compelling story of Cst. Baltej Dhillon.

The RCMP member, now stationed in Quesnel, described his reasons and the price he paid to have the national police force allow him to wear a turban in conjunction with his uniform. He told students about death threats and about the difficulties of being in the national spotlight over such a contentious issue.

Dhillon spoke about the need to erase racism in Canada. He said this country has extended open arms to immigrants from all over the world and he called upon students to accept each other in the spirit of what is inside of them, rather than their outward appearances.

We, as a society, would do well to practise what Dhillon preaches. Coming to understand each other as individuals rather than as polarized racial, cultural or ideological groups would go a long way to uniting Canadians as a nation.

Feelings of alienation between the Native and French Canadian minorities and the Anglo-Saxon majority, is one of the nation's most pressing problems.

The ability to reach out to all others in Canada, regardless of race, color or creed would be a sign of great national maturity.

Thankfully, we have people such as Cst. Dhillon to remind us that we are still a long way from achieving that aim.

# Fight racism, turbaned Mountie urges

By Paul Galinski  
Mirror Reporter

Robron students were told to join the fight against racism in Canada.

"Until you say 'I'm against racism' people are going to assume otherwise," said Cst. Baltej Dhillon, the RCMP member who campaigned to wear a turban with his uniform as part of his Sikh religious conviction. "You have the power to change how this school is going to be.

"You have the power to set out the rules and regulations."

Dhillon, who has been posted in Quesnel for the past year and a half, was speaking to Robron students in conjunction with Multicultural Week at the school. During his campaign to get permission to wear his turban, Dhillon received death threats, as well as many letters of support.

He said that Canada is a country that has welcomed many cultures, races and religions into its fold. Looking around at the students in the room, he said there were people of different colored skin, backgrounds,

"At one point I realized that I am as good as anyone else and I don't deserve to be called names."

-- Cst. Baltej Dhillon

cultures, races and religions.

"Even among the white people there are different cultures," he said. "For the ones who are more visible, however, some of you may have experienced racism and others may have felt prejudice, jokes, comments and comedy."

He said to the students that, at this stage, some of the jokes they make by calling each other names may be things they eventually outgrow.

"But tomorrow it may be something that you believe in,"

he said. "With these misconceptions or beliefs, you are selling yourself short.

"These things lead to violence or polarization of groups. People end up taking sides."

Dhillon said racism is born out of fear and of people feeling threatened. He said, however, that we are all Canadians and are in the struggle together.

"We all have to deal with the debt, taxes, GST and policies," he said. "Some minorities also have to deal with discrimination.

"This is a real issue and I can't

do it alone. I need the support of the majority and I'm convinced the majority does not discriminate and is not racist."

Dhillon said it is time to take the power away from those who say people who have different colored skin are weaker or are not smarter.

"We have to take that power away. People have to look at personalities, not skin color, race or religion.

"It's who they are — what's within them."

Having campaigned to wear his turban as part of his RCMP uniform, Dhillon has come face to face with racism, he said.

"It's a constant battle. I've been called all kinds of names and at one point I thought it was normal.

"At one point I realized that I am as good as anyone else and I don't deserve to be called names."

He tried to change the situation by fighting, but he said he learned the only person he can change is himself.

"I'm confident with myself and I'm helping others feel comfortable," he said. "I tell

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GROUNDBREAKING COP...Cst. Baltej Dhillon, from Quesnel, spoke to Robron students about racism and about his quest to wear a turban as part of his RCMP uniform. The presentation was the highlight of the school's Multicultural Week.

# Mountie faces name calling

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people I lose respect if they call names.

"I'm who I am no matter what anyone says. If someone calls me a 'raghead,' what will that do to change anything?"

Dhillon said if anyone asks why he wears a turban, he is pleased to explain why he appealed to the RCMP commissioner to wear his turban.

"I felt it was necessary to change the dress code," he said. "I would not accept the job without the turban."

"It is a basic requirement of being a Sikh. You have to have unshorn hair and wear a turban."

It is required as part of his religion, Dhillon said.

Meanwhile, he wonders what intelligence a person possess if they call another names.

"That's fear and ignorance, living in a hole, under some rock. Let's get beyond and treat each other the way we want to be treated."

"If you call another a name you are looking at yourself in a mirror and are calling yourself names."

Dhillon said while he is on patrol wearing his turban, there is a lot of name calling, but he hesitates to call it racism. He said white constables are "honky pigs" or "white pigs" and he is a "Paki pig."

"You can't let these things bother you when you are on patrol. If you did, you would become a psychopath."

When asked how he has been accepted by his fellow RCMP officers after his drive to wear the turban as part of his uniform, Dhillon said it has not been a

problem.

"The RCMP has a high level of standard in recruitment," he said. "If we had a racist officer — this guy has a gun."

Dhillon was also asked if his initiative has affected life for

his 13-month-old daughter. He said he thinks it will and he hopes it is for the positive.

"I have saved all of the media coverage so I can show her what I went through."