

"HQ" Records S/Section
S/Section des Douanes "HQ"

87-11716

REVIEWER
RÉVISIEUR

ALL MEMBERS OF THE FORCE

On 86-03-04 the Government tabled in Parliament its response to the recommendations of the Equality Rights Sub/Committee. Among the responses the Government stated its intention to "take whatever measures are necessary to ensure that sexual orientation is a prohibited ground of discrimination in all areas of federal jurisdiction". In its response the Government did not specify any action that would be taken to facilitate this goal.

Members will recall that I have taken the position that we would not knowingly engage homosexuals and that if a serving member was found to be homosexual that we would deal with each case on its merits. With the advent of the Charter of Rights it became necessary by virtue of section one that any such prohibition be prescribed in law. It was my intention to publish a Commissioner's Standing Order to set out the Force's position, however with the establishment of the Equality Sub/Committee to study equality issues as contained in the Charter this avenue was no longer open to me. Members will also recall that the Force's position before this Sub/Committee was that the Force has been placed in the position of having to legislate against the employment of homosexuals within the Regular Members of the Force. Therefore it should be clear to all members that the Force's position was well articulated and they should be assured that there is not only a full appreciation of what is at issue but also that the nature of the unique character of the Force and its requirements have been fully conveyed to Government.

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The Government's response to the Equality Rights Sub/Committee report represents a commitment to enhancing individual rights and freedoms. This objective must be pursued in a very delicate fashion so that there is a proper balance with the role and responsibilities of the national police force of Canada. These are both national objectives which must be achieved in concert one with the other.

Therefore very complex matters must be resolved and the development of a course of action which addresses all of the potential areas of conflict must be found. It is therefore not possible to specify immediately what changes in policy and procedures can be expected. Members may be sure that in responding to the Government's new policy guidelines on equality rights we will do our best to balance the rights of individuals with the mission of the Force.

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