



Gays of Ottawa / Gais de l'Outaouais

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The Honourable R. Kaplan,
Solicitor General of Canada,
House of Commons
Ottawa, CANADA.

Dear Mr. Kaplan;

On behalf of Gays of Ottawa, I wish to thank you for your interim reply of 15 January, 1982 to Mr. Orr's series of letters concerning the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry Concerning Certain Activities of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

In answer to one of our original inquiries, you have now raised as barriers to the destruction of the files, judicial procedure and the necessity for the development of improved information management within the RCMP. As you state, these problems require resolution before you can act on the files.

In the short term, we can appreciate that these difficulties may exist. However, we are concerned that you have directly linked the destruction of the files, which are totally unnecessary for national security purposes, to the development of "satisfactory new policies on the overall management and control of information in the security intelligence agency." Consequently, although we have other concerns which will be addressed in future correspondence, in this letter we wish to focus on the development of the new information management policies to ensure that the central issue affecting Gays is thoroughly explored and acted upon within the Department.

The basis for our attention to this significant issue is the McDonald Commission's discovery of the Department's demonstrated "insensitivity" towards Gays and the "poor analytical capability within the Security Service" concerning homosexuality. With this in mind, we trust that you will agree that a unilateral development by the Department of new policies affecting Gays is certainly not advisable without the assembly of expert opinion in these areas.

Consequently, we would appreciate your assurance that, in the development of such important new policies, the Department will be seeking public, or at least, selected expert opinion to provide the information and views necessary to the formulation of those aspects of the Department's policies affecting Gays.

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Will the Department be consulting with other national governments such as those of the Netherlands and Sweden which appear to have successfully dealt with similar security concerns?

What necessary steps in addition to the above will the Department be taking to ensure that homophobia is not institutionalized into the new policies as it was in past RCMP practice?

In view of the Prime Minister's firm commitment to us in his letter of 4 February, 1978 that the Government will "make every effort to eliminate prejudiced attitudes towards homosexuals", will the Department be taking advantage of the latest scientific and sociological studies which discredit the "character defect" interpretation of homosexuality which has apparently dominated and prejudiced past RCMP practice?

In considering these issues, Gays of Ottawa judges that it is in a unique position to assist the Department where it lacks the essential expertise. Accordingly, Gays of Ottawa is prepared to form a Committee with access to expert opinion in those areas of direct relevance to policy formulation on Gays. We offer to the Minister our assistance in this matter and would appreciate your favourable reaction to our availability for consultation.

In your closing remarks, we note with some satisfaction your view that the "RCMP is fully prepared to conform to these (Government's) policies in every respect". Indeed, each and every Canadian has always expected nothing less. Consequently, I must reiterate my concern and that of my colleagues regarding the content of those policies for which you have unequivocal approval authority and which, in the past, have caused Gays so much unnecessary anguish and persecution.

We look forward to the "fully satisfactory answer" that you have promised to provide "shortly" on this and other issues. We trust that our confidence and that of all Canadians will not be misplaced.

Sincerely,


John Duggan