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SUBJ: EQUALITY RIGHTS IN THE CF

1. ON 4 MAR 86 THE GOVERNMENT TABLED IN PARLIAMENT ITS RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EQUALITY RIGHTS SUBCOMMITTEE. 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 RELATION TO ALL AREAS OF FEDERAL JURISDICTION, AND THAT WOMEN WOULD BE EMPLOYED IN ALL TRADES

AND CLASSIFICATIONS OF THE CF SUBJECT TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND NATIONAL SECURITY

2. OVER THE PAST YEAR NDHQ STAFFS HAVE PUT INTENSIVE EFFORT INTO A MAJOR PROGRAM TO EVALUATE EVERY FACET AND RAMIFICATION OF THESE AND OTHER ISSUES PERTAINING TO THE EQUALITY PROVISIONS OF THE CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND THEIR EFFECT ON THE CANADIAN FORCES. THIS REVIEW HAS INVOLVED THE CDS PERSONALLY WITH HIS SENIOR COMMANDERS AND GROUP

COMMISSIONER'S
OFFICE

MAR 7 1986

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PRINCIPALS EXTENSIVELY. THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN NUMEROUS DISCUSSIONS AND BRIEFINGS AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL. ALL MEMBERS MAY THUS BE REASSURED THAT THERE IS NOT ONLY A FULL APPRECIATION OF WHAT IS AT ISSUE BUT ALSO THAT THE NATURE OF THE UNIQUE CHARACTER OF THE FORCES AND THEIR REQUIREMENTS HAVE BEEN CONVEYED FULLY TO GOVERNMENT

3. THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION AS EXPRESSED IN THE RESPONSE REPRESENTS A COMMITMENT TO THE OBJECTIVE OF ENHANCING INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS IN CANADA. HOWEVER THE GOVERNMENT IS ALSO FULLY MINDFUL OF THE BASIC RAISON D'ETRE OF THE CANADIAN FORCES AND IN ANOTHER PART OF THE RESPONSE FULL RECOGNITION WAS GIVEN TO THE OVERRIDING REQUIREMENT OF THE CANADIAN FORCES TO BE OPERATIONALLY EFFECTIVE IN THE INTERESTS OF NATIONAL SECURITY. THUS THERE ARE TWO

NATIONAL OBJECTIVES INVOLVED AND THE ATTAINMENT OF EACH MUST BE SOUGHT WITHOUT UNDUE INJURY TO THE OTHER IN SITUATIONS WHERE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE GOVERNMENT'S INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND NATIONAL SECURITY POLICIES MAY BE IN CONFLICT

4. TO BE RESOLVED THEREFORE ARE VERY COMPLEX MATTERS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COURSE OF ACTION THAT CAN PROPERLY ADDRESS ALL OF THE POTENTIAL AREAS OF CONFLICTING REQUIREMENTS INHERENT IN THE TWO

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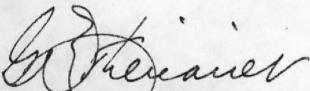
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OBJECTIVES WILL BE A MAJOR UNDERTAKING. I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THIS WORK WILL BE TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE UNIQUE NATURE OF THE FORCES AND THE CONCERNS OF MEMBERS REGARDING THE POTENTIAL INFRINGEMENT OF THEIR RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS RESULTING FROM THE LIMITED FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND LACK OF PRIVACY THAT ARE UNAVOIDABLE IN MILITARY LIFE

5. BECAUSE OF THE COMPLEXITY THAT WE FACE IN RECONCILING THE VARIOUS REQUIREMENTS THAT ARE BEFORE US, IT IS SIMPLY NOT POSSIBLE TO SPECIFY IMMEDIATELY WHAT CHANGES IN POLICY AND PROCEDURES CAN BE EXPECTED AND NECESSARY CHANGES WILL BE PUBLISHED IN DUE COURSE. I HAVE DIRECTED THE IMMEDIATE FORMATION OF A CHARTER TASK FORCE AT NDHQ TO PURSUE VIGOROUSLY THESE EQUALITY RIGHTS MATTERS

6. IN CONCLUSION, YOU MAY BE SURE THAT, IN RESPONDING TO THE GOVERNMENT'S NEW POLICY GUIDELINES ON EQUALITY RIGHTS, WE WILL DO OUR BEST, IN THE SPIRIT OF THE CHARTER, TO BALANCE THE RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE IMPERATIVES OF OUR PRIMARY MISSION


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