

15.6.



Minister National Defence Ministre Défense nationale

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0K2

Mr. Terry Sargeant, M.P.
Room 655-D
House of Commons
Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Sargeant:

I refer to your letter of 22 April 1982 wherein you have inquired into my Department's policy regarding the sexual preference of personnel in the Canadian Forces.

Canadian Forces policy in this matter is contained in Canadian Forces Administrative Order 19-20, and I enclose a copy of that order for your information. If it is determined that a member is a person to whom the provisions of this order have application, the member is normally released from the Canadian Forces under Item 5(d) of the Table to Article 15.01 of the Queen's Regulations and Orders for the Canadian Forces - "Not Advantageously Employable". If released under this item the member's Certificate of Service would read "Honourably Released". If a member is released and he believes that he has suffered personal oppression, injustice or other ill-treatment, he may submit a Redress of Grievance. In this regard the regulations which have application are contained in the Queen's Regulations and Orders for the Canadian Forces at Articles 19.26 and 19.27, copies of which are also attached.

This policy is based, for the most part, upon the fact that the Canadian Forces, unlike most other employers, provides in many instances a combined working and social milieu. Because in such a milieu persons having unusual behavioural traits may attempt to inflict them upon others, there is only one method of assuring our servicemen and women that their rights will be respected: by denying employment to homosexuals. This is particularly important when servicemen and servicewomen are

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ordered to isolated posts, to serve at sea, or to a communal life in barracks or in the field; situations where personal privacy is difficult or impossible.

In such circumstances, where the employee has no choice as to either his environment or the company he keeps, the employer has an obligation to provide a milieu which is acceptable to the vast majority of his employees. As a matter of fact, experience has shown that the presence of homosexuals can be most disruptive. Such disruption often takes the form of physical attacks on the homosexual(s) concerned, and it is possible to prevent this sort of thing only by avoiding the employment of homosexuals in the first place.

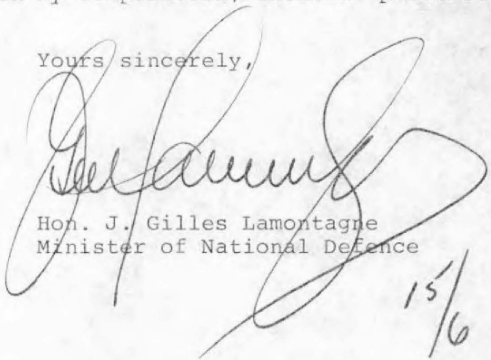
There is also the serious question of the image of the Canadian Forces in the eyes of the public. This is of direct concern to me since the maintenance of a volunteer force depends a great deal on how that force is viewed by potential recruits and by their relatives and friends. My personal view is that the majority of Canadians are not prepared to accept the idea of homosexuals in the Forces, and that they would not see such an organization as a suitable environment for their sons and daughters.

Unless and until social attitudes change considerably, it is impossible to place homosexuals in positions where a security clearance is required. Such persons are still, in our society, subject to blackmail either directly or indirectly because of the involvement of a partner.

Finally, and most importantly, a substantial number of military personnel serve outside the country: under United Nations, NORAD and NATO auspices, or in Canadian military missions throughout the world. In a great many cases, homosexuals would be ineligible for such service because of the laws or social mores of the host country. Such limitations on the employment of homosexuals are a fact of life and would seriously reduce the operational flexibility of the Forces.

I thank you for your interest in this matter and trust you will continue to rely on my cooperation, whenever possible, in the future.

Yours sincerely,


Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne
Minister of National Defence

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