



National
Défense
Référence
nationale



THE GAZETTE, MONTREAL, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1990 B1

Military will no longer hunt down homosexual soldiers

But the ban on hiring or promoting gays remains in effect for now, minister says

STEPHEN BINDMAN
SOUTHAM NEWS



OTTAWA — The Canadian military will no longer hunt down suspected homosexuals within its ranks.

But the armed forces' policy against "knowingly" hiring or promoting gays will remain in effect until the federal government completes a review of the Canadian Human Rights Act this year, Associate Defence Minister Mary Collins said yesterday.

Collins said she has accepted the recommendation of an independent review that the military's security service should no longer target suspected homosexuals for investigation.

"The mere fact of being a homosexual or being suspected of homosexual activities will not be grounds for a security clearance review and the Special Inves-

tigation Unit is no longer mandated to undertake those investigations," Collins said in an interview.

"That recommendation has been accepted and has already been put into effect."

Former county court judge Rene Marin, in a report made public last month, said there is "no reason whatsoever" for the counter-intelligence unit to single out homosexuals for investigation.

Although a person's sexual orientation might in some circumstances be a cause for concern in assessing a security risk, Marin said, those are "generic problems that are not limited to the question of homosexuality."

But New Democratic MP Svend Robinson said Collins's response to the report raised more questions than it answered.

"It's doublespeak. If in fact the policy is still on the books, who will in practical terms enforce it?"

Robinson, the only admitted homosexual MP, asked: "Are they creating a new enforcement body or is the policy in practical terms a dead letter? I certainly hope so."

Marin's review was ordered this year by the chief of the defence staff following complaints from the independent Security Intelligence Review Committee, which investigates the denial of security clearances.

The head of the watchdog body, John Bassett, told a Commons committee that the special investigation unit uses "unacceptable and unbelievable" procedures in its investigations.

In August, the committee criticized the unit for its "deplorable" conduct in investigating an air-force lieutenant sus-

pected of being gay.

The government is appealing the committee's ruling that 26-year-old Michelle Douglas should be reinstated and that forces policy violates the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Committee member Paule Gauthier said Douglas was taken to a hotel room under false pretences and grilled about her sexual activities by two men, was virtually forced to take a lie-detector test and was not allowed to seek legal advice.

Gauthier said the investigators showed an "intense prurient interest" in the woman's sexual activities and treated her in a manner "which strains credulity."

The military has set up a team of senior officials to study Marin's other recommendations, which include tighter controls and better training.

Date:

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1990

Media
Review
Revue de
Presse

JAG

Handwritten notes: "10/27/90", "2:00 PM", "File", "CD", "to", "Please", "Steve", "10/27/90"

For information: (613) 995-2713
Pour renseignements: (613) 995-2713