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Military to review gay issue

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OTTAWA — The sensitive topic of discrimination against homosexuals in the military may end up before a new committee on social change announced by the Defence Department yesterday.

The "national defence consultative committee on social change" is an 18-member panel of business people, academics and former soldiers. Marilyn Mohan, president of Mana Research Ltd., of Vancouver and Louis Fecteau, a Montreal lawyer, are the co-chairs of the group.

The committee is to look at social trends and pressures in

the military workforce — the increased emphasis on individual rights, the changing roles of women, dual-career marriages, single-parent families — and make recommendations to the government.

"We . . . must adjust our policies where necessary," said Defence Minister Marcel Masse.

One of the social controversies facing the military is its policy of discriminating against homosexuals in uniform.

Under current policy, acknowledged homosexuals are not to be recruited. Those already in the Forces are not to be promoted.

A decision to end discrimination will be welcome news for people such as Michelle Douglas. She is a former lieutenant who finished at the top of her basic training platoon then was drummed out of the military in 1989 after she acknowledged she was a lesbian.

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