

DND PRESS CONFERENCE - JANUARY 24, 1992

Questions asked to Marcel Masse

Question

Several months ago Mary Collins told the Committee that there would be a decision by the end of last year on the policy regarding sexual orientation in the Armed Forces. What's the reason for the delay and will we have an announcement soon?

Answer

On this matter the question has been discussed in the Department and the recommendation has been sent to the Privy Council for the Government approval, and the Government is thinking on this matter, and for our part the recommendation is made.

Question

So when will the Government make a decision?

Answer

You'll have to ask the government. In the sense that our responsibility and mine as a Minister was to make the recommendation, so it's not on the agenda today, but you have to check with those who define the Government agenda for discussion which is the Privy Council and Prime Minister Office.

Question

Are you expecting difficulties at this meeting(a few words are unclear)?

Answer

It's obviously something which is on the discussions, a member of the caucus doesn't like it, that's it, I'm not changing my recommendations.

Question

Do you agree with the recommendations?

Answer

My recommendation? sure,

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Question

You agree with it?

Answer

With my recommendation, yes.

Question

Why would a small minority of caucus people hold something up like this?

Answer

Because it's obviously a subject which gave some moral preoccupations for some people. It's not something which is materials, like buying equipment or things like that. So when you are in the feel of that kind of moral discussions, I think it's hard to give a chance to people to where their whole approach on a matter like that, we have to give them the time for that.

Question

Was the problem in caucus or is the problem in Cabinet.

Answer

The problem is in caucus.

Question

There's no problem in Cabinet as far as you know?

Answer

The recommendation that Cabinet face at every preliminary stage has been approved and the discussion is within the caucus and after that a final decision will be taken by the Prime Minister.

Question

That's quite rare isn't it Minister for members of caucus to hold up a Government policy that's been documented by the Ministers and OK'd by the Cabinet?

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Answer

No, no, no, on the opposite, on all those matters I don't know if its the right english expression of what I call moral decision like I don't know, let's say abortion, pornography, you can have a long list of subjects of that kind which are always very much discussed by caucus, as long as a large consensus is not made on those matters, the situation is delayed, so it's not a special case in that sense.

Question

But ultimately it's up to the majority of caucus to decide on this?

Answer

I will not say it's a question of vote, because you don't have rules, by rules of the caucus, you see it's not something which is ruled by law in the caucus, that's why I prefer to talk about consensus.

Question

So you're saying there is no consensus yet.

Answer

No consensus yet.

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