

PE files

Department of External Affairs



Canada

Ministère des Affaires extérieures

OTTAWA K1A 0G2

SECRET

February 21, 1977

PSSV-608

Dear Mr. Hall,

Homosexuality in the Public Service

We are most grateful for the opportunity to comment on the second draft paper of January 14, 1977 which has been prepared on the above noted subject.

Perhaps we should begin our comments by noting that we certainly agree with the general thrust of both the background paper and the draft memorandum to Deputy Ministers and Heads of Agencies. We have provided you with a copy of a provisional paper prepared in this Department on the question of a departmental policy with respect to homosexuality. I think you will agree that the two papers are compatible and complementary.

A second general comment is that we are pleased to notice at several points throughout the background paper and the draft memorandum, that distinctions are suggested between conditions that may pertain to the domestic service and conditions that may pertain in the foreign service. In our view the particular conditions of the foreign service including the high visibility of Ambassadors and members of Embassies, the isolation of many of our missions and indeed attitudes towards homosexuality in other parts of the world, combined with the high sensitivity of the information with which the foreign services deals, creates a situation where we think there would be merit in emphasizing in both papers

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- 2 -

SECRET

the difficulties from a security point of view of accepting homosexuality in the foreign service.

We hope that the following specific comments may be helpful.

The Background Paper

We should like to underline our agreement with the points made on page 7 of this draft with respect to the criticism of open homosexuals and with respect to the problem of homosexuality at senior levels of the Public Service especially those who serve abroad. On page 9, we certainly concur, in sub-paragraph 3 entitled "Black Mail", with the point made about vulnerability increasing in respect to the level of the potential victim in the hierarchy. At the same time we should note, and again perhaps this is an argument for the particular problems of the foreign service, that many of our relatively low level employees, messengers, clerks, etc. have access to extremely sensitive information. Vulnerability in such employees whilst they are serving abroad could have as deleterious consequences for the Government as the vulnerability of senior officers.

On page 10 of the background paper we certainly concur with the proposed revision of CD-35. To argue, in 1977 that homosexuality is "illicit sexual behaviour" in our view is an invitation to a public debate. From our point of view the key is that homosexuality continues to render the individual a risk by virtue of vulnerability to exploitation.

On page 13 of the background paper, and again in the draft memorandum to Deputy Ministers, there is a discussion of whether departments might be required or advised to seek medical and psychiatrist reports to assist them in estimating the risk involved. We have some hesitation about this approach. In almost every instance sexual proclivities constitute a permanent condition. There are many unanswered questions, we understand, when homosexuality is considered in medical terms. While a psychiatrist might be able to advise as to any individual's acceptance and understanding of his condition, we would doubt that the average psychiatrist would be in any position to assess the pressures that could be brought to bear on an individual by, for example, hostile intelligence agencies. Medical personnel simply would not have expert knowledge in this area, unless such personnel were recruited by the Government's security services. On balance, therefore, we wonder whether such advice would really be helpful, or whether it would cause departments to tend to accept medical

. . . 3

- 3 -

SECRET

advice as final, even though that advice could not take into account all relevant circumstances. We would think therefore that paragraph 2 on page 4 of the draft memorandum to Deputy Ministers might be amended to make clear that medical advice, if sought, should only be one factor and a medical one at that in the equation.

Draft Memorandum to Deputy Ministers

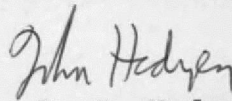
We consider this paper, as noted above, to be both specific and useful. We agree with its general conclusions, thrust and advice. We would suggest the following amendments:

In paragraph 7 on page 3 we would suggest deletion of the words "cannot be black mailed" in line 2, and the substitution of "is less easily black mailed". We think that many homosexuals who consider themselves invulnerable are, in fact, vulnerable if the right kind of pressure is applied.

In paragraph 8 on page 3, we would suggest adding for consideration in determining suitability for access "has the person ever been subjected to attempts at coercion or extortion" and "might his present emotional attachment tend to override other considerations (e.g. loyalty)?"

We hope these comments are helpful. We look forward to further consultations with you as the papers evolve.

Yours sincerely,



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Director General  
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Intelligence Liaison