

MEMORANDUM

1460-45-3 (DGC Svc)

/o May 85

VCDS

EQUALITY ISSUES SUBCOMMITTEE
COMMISSIONER OF HUMAN RIGHTS PRESENTATION

1. On 9 May 85, the Commissioner of Human Rights appeared before the Subcommittee on Equality Issues. A copy of his presentation is attached.
2. It is of interest that the first item singled out for special mention (page 7) is sexual orientation, which the Human Rights Commission "has repeatedly urged....be made a ground on which discrimination is prohibited under the Canadian Human Rights Act." This stand is consistent with the recommendations of a study contracted by the Commission in 1979 entitled Sexual Orientation - A Policy Planning Report. The first recommendation of this study, on the strategy to end discrimination based on sexual orientation, was "... apply pressure on the R.C.M.P., the Armed Forces and government departments to engage in full, frank and open debate on the issue." Also, officials of the Department of Justice have mentioned that their project schedule includes a bill to amend the Human Rights Act in late 1985. Among other amendments proposed will be the inclusion of sexual orientation as a prohibited ground for discrimination.
3. During questioning, Mr Svend Robinson held up to severe ridicule the R.C.M.P. position paper on sexual orientation. This paper was strikingly similar to an early version of the Canadian Forces' position paper on the subject. Of most interest and concern, no counter argument or view was expressed by any member of the Subcommittee.
4. It seems likely that the challenge to our current policy on sexual orientation will be much stronger than originally assumed.



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