

MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCESTATEMENT ON OPTION FOURGENERAL

1. Option Four states that "Homosexuals and Heterosexuals would be released if their sexual conduct is harmful to the operational effectiveness of the Forces".

2. The advantages listed for Option Four include: "It could be interpreted as consistent with Mr. Beatty's statement that homosexuals will be released on conduct, if conduct is qualified as 'conduct harmful to the operational effectiveness of the Forces' and the policy is extended to heterosexuals".

DISCUSSION

3. Insofar as heterosexual behaviour is concerned, the situation called for by Option Four is a situation which already exists and has always existed. Indeed, the behaviour of any member which diminishes operational effectiveness, for whatever reason, has always been the basis for potential separation from the Forces.

4. Notwithstanding the existence of the rules contemplated by Option Four, the presence of homosexuals in the Forces was felt to be so inimical to operational effectiveness as to require a policy excluding all of them (CFAO 19-20), and subsequently a policy excluding practising homosexuals (CFAO 19-36), the latter being the policy that I announced to the Standing Committee on Human Rights on 11 Feb 87.

5. It is the position of the Chief of the Defence Staff, supported by the findings of the Charter Task Force Report, that any policy which permits the retention of practising homosexuals in the Canadian Forces would lead to a breakdown in unit cohesiveness and to a loss of confidence in the command structure, thus undermining the morale of the Canadian Forces and its operational effectiveness. I support that position, and indeed it was the basis for the policy I announced on 11 Feb.

6. The policy that would be made permanent if Option Four were to be approved (whereby homosexuals are not released for behaviour for which a heterosexual would not be released), with the consequent retention

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of practising homosexuals in the Forces, is leading, and will continue to lead, to serious difficulties which the Chief of the Defence Staff assures me are presently adversely affecting operational effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

7. In the interests of maintaining operational effectiveness in the Canadian Forces, I cannot agree to the interpretation which Option Four places on the statement I made on 11 Feb 87 and which would officially sanction the presence of practising homosexuals in the Canadian Forces.