

committee had such a positive response from a Government in this House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

POLICY GOVERNING HOMOSEXUALS AND LESBIANS

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. Current Government policy prohibits the Canadian Armed Forces from hiring gays and lesbians and orders that they be immediately fired. Will the Minister confirm that these policies, which have caused such pain to and oppression of so many Canadians, will immediately be rescinded as unanimously recommended by the subcommittee on equality rights?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): The hon. gentleman has heard the reply of the Minister of Justice. In case he has not read the report thoroughly as yet, he will find the response set out in detail on page 25.

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask this very specific supplementary question. In the event that a Canadian who happens to be gay or lesbian applies tomorrow to join the Canadian Armed Forces, will this Minister tell them they are not qualified? Or will he say that an end to discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation means that the Armed Forces and the RCMP should be open to all Canadians and there should be no further discrimination against gays and lesbians?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): The Government's response is fully set forth on page 13.

Mr. Broadbent: Read it, Erik.

Mr. Nielsen: Sure. The Leader of the NDP obviously has not read it yet, so let me read it to him:

The Government believes that one's sexual orientation is irrelevant to whether one can perform a job or use a service or facility.

The Government will take its responsibilities and do whatever is necessary to achieve that principle.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

HOMOSEXUAL BEHAVIOUR DIRECTIVE

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. This is an opportunity for him to respond to charges that this report is nothing more than double-speak. Will he announce today that Cabinet

Oral Questions

Directive 35, which is still in force and which describes homosexual behaviour as a character defect, will be revoked?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the Government's response to the report is before the House. The Hon. Member must have seen the response to recommendation 10 which was just read to the House by the Minister of National Defence. Other responses were to mandatory retirement, common law spouses, women in the Armed Forces, and the like. She has seen all of those so she will see that the matter is more than adequately dealt with, including the response to the section dealing with security matters in the area she has raised.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, the Government is saying it is not prepared—

Some Hon. Members: Order!

Ms. Copps: —to take its responsibilities under the Charter. It is going to leave it up to the courts.

REQUEST FOR REVOCATION OF DIRECTIVE

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Prime Minister very directly whether he will or will not revoke Cabinet Directive 35, which refers to illicit sexual behaviour as a character defect, when it concerns admission into the Armed Forces, the RCMP, and other equal employment opportunity employers in the Civil Service? Will the Prime Minister, not the Minister of Justice, answer the question?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I hate to ignore the hon. lady's advice but I really must answer this question because it is too confusing for anyone else to answer who has not been intimately involved with the report. Now, could I—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): Now we know.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Penner: I think the Prime Minister understands.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Supplementary.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, the hon. ladies and gentlemen opposite may have nothing but illicit sexual activity on their minds, but the Prime Minister does not. He has other things to think about.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): Explain.