

OSSOMM
BOX 26
MYNARSKI PARK, ALTA.
TOM LNO
JANUARY 22, 1986.

11

The Hon. Joe Clark
House of Commons,
Ottawa, Ontario.

Dear Mr. Clark;

You will note that there has been a delay in sending the enclosed letter to you which was written in December 1985. This is due to delays in conferring with other members and supporters across Canada concerning a request for a Royal Government Commission dealing with the concerns of spouses and families of Canadian military members.

Please accept this belated letter with the same wishes for you and your family for what we hope was a joyous Christmas and health and happiness in 1986.

Sincerely yours;



Mary Anne Jablonski
Vice-President
Organizational Society of Spouses
of Military Members

OSSOMM

Box 26

Mynarski Park, Alberta

TOM LNO

December 1, 1985.

The Hon. Joe Clark
House Of Commons,
Ottawa, Ontario.

Dear Mr. Clark;

Please accept our sincere thanks for the consideration and respect you gave our Calgary Representatives during the open public meeting with Jim Hawkes in Calgary on November 23, 1985. Our spokesperson for Calgary, Leslie Taylor, inquired about the possibility of appointing a royal commission to investigate the concerns of military families. The McDougall Report was cited as an example of how effective a royal commission can be. Your reply was, " It is very much worth looking at whether the same kind of review" could be done for soldiers and their spouses. You asked that we write you a formal request regarding a Royal Government Commission.

We would like to emphasize a point that was made at the meeting. In reporting to a royal commission, members of our military community must be allowed to speak without fear of reprisals. This fear is great and many people feel that the careers of their spouses will be jeopardized if they were to speak out about their concerns.

We feel that it is important for you to know that OSSOMM made a sincere effort to work with the Department of National Defence. (Please refer to a copy of our letter to the Minister of National Defence and the reply we received, both enclosed.) We did not wish to go public and inadvertently embarrass our government, however, we were left with no choice.

In our brief to the Committee on Equality Rights, OSSOMM made six recommendations. These recommendations are:

1. Define Prohibited political activity under article 19:44 very specifically to be that which threatens the security of Canada. If there are certain specific activities which could pose a risk, then these should be listed. All other lobbying and participation in the democratic process should be allowed.

2. We request special status. Under para 30 of the Defense Establishment Trespass Regulations, the Minister of National Defence may from time to time, declare that the regulations or any part of them shall not apply to any defence establishment. Under this regulation, our Permanent Married Quarters could be exempted from the DETR. Any other part of the base could also be exempt if necessary. In requesting special status, we point out that we are not military members, but we are civilians living on DND property. This action would grant us our rights, but still protect the military from outside civilians.
3. Establish a civilian office with official capacity to liase between the DND, government representatives, and families with the power of an ombudsman. This office could also provide research which is much needed and sadly lacking with regards to the military and their families.
4. Drop the term DEPENDANT or DEPENDANT WIFE from regulations, law documents, publications, etc.. This wording is symbolic of the archaic attitudes. It is also inappropriate, demeaning and discriminatory. We suggest the terms spouses and children.
5. The investigation and implementation of ways to have democratic elections in PMQ'S open to all residents regardless of rank or sex. This should include the office of mayor. (or chairman or president). It should also include school board members and trustees. These elections should be outside the jurisdiction of the base commander.
6. Investigation into the administration of Non-Public Funds. These Funds are generated through the messes and the Canex system. Spouses and ordinary military families contribute to these yet have no say in the spending of the fund. It is run by the base commander and senior officers.

These six recommendations in our brief are examples of some of the concerns that members of the military community have.

page 3.

Our families are our first priorities. OSSOMM is interested only in family and social issues. We feel that if the door were opened to allow us to work hand in hand with the military, our joint efforts could result in successful improvements to living conditions for military families. This would also result in a much needed boost of morale for our servicemen.

In closing, we respectfully ask your help in investigating the possibility of appointing a Royal Government Commission to deal with the concerns of Canadian military families.

OSSOMM does not present a threat to the neutrality of the Canadian Armed Forces. We firmly believe that by making our families stronger, we make Canada stronger.

Thank you very much for your co-operation and concern. We wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and all the best in 1986.

Sincerely yours;



Mary Anne Jablonski
Vice-President OSSOMM

Leslie Taylor
Marnie Draper
Lucie Richardson
Gayle Siford
Susan Kerr