



Canadian debate on gay marriage

There is mixed reaction in Canada's press to the Ontario court ruling allowing same sex-marriages. Some papers take the chance to criticise the federal government for not showing leadership on the issue.

A **Toronto Star** editorial headline makes its feelings clear about the ruling by Ontario's provincial court. "Ottawa must allow same-sex marriage", it says, believing the federal government has no choice.

But "what next?", the paper asks, speculating on how the federal government will react to the Ontario judgement. Courts in Quebec and British Columbia have already given the go-ahead for same-sex marriages.

"Will Ottawa continue to play hot potato, handing this over to yet another court?", adding the government might pass the case to Canada's Supreme Court, the country's top court, to adjudicate.

All Canadians should have the right to marry. And it should be Parliament, not the courts, leading society to accept those changes
Toronto Star

It dismisses what it sees as the government's "ridiculous argument" that it needs to go slow in framing any legal changes because there is no "consensus" in Canada.

"All Canadians should have the right to marry. And it should be Parliament, not the courts, leading society to accept those changes," it says.

British Columbia's **Times Colonist** hopes the government will take a lead from the Ontario ruling and not force homosexual couples in each province to apply for what it sees is now their constitutional right to marry.

"Their lordships are right," it says in praise of the judges' decision.

"We've known for a long time that discrimination against homosexuals is unconstitutional, if not repugnant. We should wish them a long and happy married life as well."

A pro-equality campaigner writing in Toronto's **Globe and Mail** also urges the government to take speedy action and "clarify the situation of couples seeking to marry in other provinces and territories". Gilles Marchildon writes that "a delay in moving forward accomplishes nothing".

We have long opposed same-sex marriages, believing marriage is the unique union between a man and a woman
Toronto Sun

"If Mr. Chrétien is serious about leaving a legacy and doing the right thing, he should hear and heed the call," he adds in an appeal to the prime minister.

Marriage devalued

But not everyone thinks same-sex marriages are a good thing.

"We have long opposed same-sex marriages, believing marriage is the unique union between a man and a woman," says the **Toronto Sun** in an editorial.

"We have criticized both Parliament and legislatures for refusing to tackle this issue head-on, thus allowing the courts to decide it by default," it says.

The paper says parliament could have been pro-active in recognizing civil unions of gay and lesbian couples "and called it anything under the sun but a marriage".

But rather than that, parliament "has done nothing, leaving it to the courts to decide this issue by default, just as it did when they struck down federal laws on abortion and marijuana."

And Derek Rogusky of Canada's Focus on the Family group, writes in the **Globe and Mail** that the Ontario decision "has devalued the institution of marriage".

He accuses the Ontario court of "vastly overstepping its boundaries" in a decision which "shut out" democratically elected representatives.

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