

Liberals oppose gay marriages

THE CANADIAN PRESS

OTTAWA — The Liberal government promised to support an Opposition motion Tuesday asserting Parliament's view that marriage is the union between a man and a woman.

"The definition of marriage is already clear in law," Justice Minister Anne McLellan said during debate. "This government has no intention of changing the definition of marriage or legislating same-sex marriage."

McLellan said she does not believe it necessary to change the definition to accommodate equal-

ity concerns among gays and lesbians. The federal government has already extended survivor benefits to same-sex couples.

Courts have recognized the need for recognition of same-sex couples, she said, and the public's message is one of "tolerance, fairness and respect for others."

The motion by Reformer Eric Lowther states that Parliament believes "marriage is and should remain the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others, and that Parliament will take all necessary steps . . . to preserve this definition of marriage in Canada."

Last month, the Supreme Court struck a huge blow to discrimination against gays and lesbians suggesting their rights and responsibilities should be the same as those of heterosexual couples.

Liberal Thunder Bay-Superior North MP Joe Comuzzi, said in Tuesday press release he intended to vote for the motion to maintain the status of marriage.

"I know how the people of Thunder Bay-Superior North feel about this issue. They have told me clearly that they will not accept a marriage between two persons of the same sex," said Comuzzi.

Wed June 9, 1999