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WORLD news



Ted Nebbeling is believed to be the world's first Cabinet minister in a same-sex marriage

CANADA

A former member of the British Columbia Cabinet has married his male partner.

Full same-sex marriage was legalized in the Canadian provinces of British Columbia and Ontario last year by their respective highest courts. Member of the Legislative Assembly Ted Nebbeling, the minister of state for the Community Charter and the 2010 Olympic bid until last month, married his partner of 32 years, Jan Holmberg, in November, *The Vancouver Sun* reported Jan. 26.

The paper said it was "believed to be the first same-sex marriage of a Cabinet minister anywhere in the world." "We thought it was a great opportunity to renew our commitment together," Nebbeling said.

British Columbia Premier Gordon Campbell shuffled his Cabinet on Jan. 26 and did not reappoint Nebbeling. Campbell said the decision was unrelated to Nebbeling's wedding.

A member of Parliament who made disparaging remarks about gays has been dumped by his political party.

In November, Canadian Alliance MP Larry Spencer told *The Vancouver Sun*: "I do believe it was a mistake to have legalized [gay sex]. I just wish that there was some way that society could stand up and say, 'This is not right.' [If] anybody that used Colgate toothpaste, their life expectancy was lowered by 10, 15 years, what do you think would happen to Colgate toothpaste? It would be outlawed. Well, we know that's what happens to men living a gay lifestyle."

Spencer, who represents Regina, Saskatchewan, also claimed gays stage "conventions" to plot the seduction of children. "For this group of people to express themselves sexually, they're going to have to do the recruiting and...it's going to come by seduction," he said.

As a result of these remarks, the Conservative Party of Canada—which was created in December by the merger of the Canadian Alliance and Progressive Conservative parties—voted Feb. 4 that Spencer is no longer welcome in its ranks. Should he seek re-election in his district, he will have to run as an independent.

The Montreal Police Service will begin testing new recruits for HIV and rejecting those who are positive, local media reported Jan. 24.

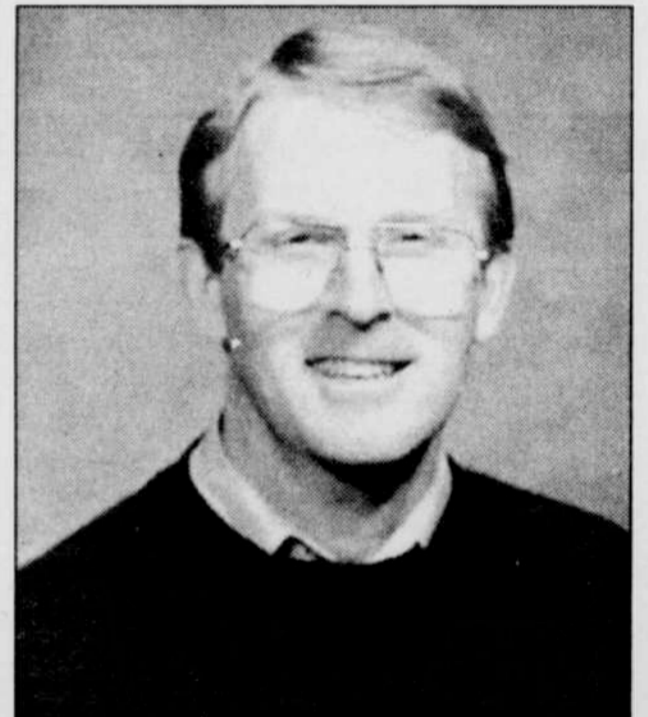
Current officers will not be tested. A city spokesman said the tests are necessary to protect public health and save money.

The British Columbia College of Teachers, the province's teacher certification and regulation body, did not violate the rights of a high school teacher it suspended for writing anti-gay letters to a local newspaper, the provincial Supreme Court ruled Feb. 5.

Chris Kempling, who teaches in the south-central town of Quesnel, faces a month of decertification that will be postponed again while he appeals to the province's highest court, the Court of Appeal. If he loses there, Kempling promises to push on to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Kempling says his rights to freedom of expression and religion, as guaranteed by Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms, have been violated. The College of Teachers says his "discriminatory" and "derogatory" statements constituted unbecoming conduct that conflicted with the provincial education system's commitment to equality, dignity and respect for gay people.

In ruling against Kempling, Supreme Court Justice Ronald Holmes stated: "Discriminatory speech is incompatible with the search for truth.... By publicly linking his private, discriminatory views of homosexuality with his status and professional judgment as a teacher and secondary school counselor, the appellant called into question his own preparedness to be impartial in the fulfillment of his professional and legal obligations to all students, as well as the impartiality of the school system. That in itself is a harmful impact on the school system as a nondiscriminatory entity."



B.C. teacher Chris Kempling was suspended for writing anti-gay letters to a local newspaper

A total of 700 same-sex couples got married in British Columbia last year after the Court of Appeal opened up the institution July 8, *The Vancouver Sun* reported Jan. 28.

Of these 1,400 people, 847 hailed from outside the province. Nonresidents, including foreigners, can get married in the provinces of British Columbia and Ontario—arriving, buying a license and marrying the same day in either locale.

A total of 766 of the newlyweds were U.S. citizens, and 21 came from Australia, the United Kingdom, France, Hong Kong, Ireland, New Zealand and Switzerland. The rest came from elsewhere in Canada—Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec and the Yukon.

Canada's federal government has said that it agrees with the British Columbia and Ontario court decisions opening up regular marriage to same-sex couples in 2003 and that it will pass legislation legalizing same-sex marriage across the country—although new Prime Minister Paul Martin is seen as less keen on the idea than his predecessor, Jean Chrétien, who made the pledge.

The government added a question Jan. 28 to its pending request for advice from the Supreme