

Annex "B"

SECRET

ROYAL COMMISSION ON SECURITY
RECOMMENDATION RE PERSONNEL SECURITY

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

The Public Service Commission submits for the consideration of the Security Panel its observations and comments on the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Security that is set out in subparagraph (a) of paragraph 360 (page 229 of the unabridged report) which reads:

"(a) Before a person is employed in the public service, whether or not he is likely to have access to classified material, his name should be checked against the subversive records and he should be the subject of a fingerprint check against criminal records. Adverse information need not result in rejection, but the information should be made available to the employing department, which can request further inquiries if they appear to be necessary."

It is the Commission's considered opinion that this recommendation is unrealistic because it does not take into account the nature of the work performed by a substantial proportion of the Public Service, and that to implement it would not only create heavy costs, but would not be in the best interests either of security or of the Public Service.

The federal civilian public service consists of some 210,000 people. Of these, nearly half are employed in the Operational Category, which consists essentially of manual workers. Operational Category employees sort and deliver mail, maintain buildings and grounds, operate equipment, man warehouses, repair ships and vehicles, prepare and serve food, and man ships. While some Operational Category employees, such as those employed in the Navy's dockyards, have access to classified information, the majority of workers have no more access to Government secrets than Canadian citizens employed in similar work by a private employer.

Employment in the Operational Category tends to be locally oriented. Not only is geographical mobility limited, but neither transfers between departments nor promotions to other employment Categories is common. Turnover tends to be high - perhaps 15% - 20% of the employees in the Category are employed on a short-term basis.

Pre-employment security screening of all candidates for employment in the Operational Category does not seem to us to be a sensible policy having regard for the considerations set out above.

Appendix E of the Royal Commission's Report shows that total requests for clearances averaged 43,701 per year during the period 1958 - 1967, fluctuating from under 40,000 to over 48,000.

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The Public Service Commission's present area of responsibility for making appointments came into effect on March 13, 1967. Total new appointments to that part of the service for which the Commission is the appointing authority amounted to over 31,000 in 1967, and to 20,000 in 1968, a year during most of which an employment freeze was in effect. The numbers of requests for clearances initiated by the Commission were 2,628 in 1964; 3,844 in 1965; and 5,233 in 1966. It would appear then, that to implement the Royal Commission recommendation would generate 15,000 to 25,000 new security clearance requests per year, a 30% to 60% workload increase for the security investigation services.

In addition to the manpower and money costs required to implement the recommendation, there would be intangible costs that cause us grave concern.

To obtain a security clearance takes time. To implement a policy of universal pre-employment security clearance would, inevitably, build into the recruiting, selecting, appointment sequence a delay that would make it impossible for us to provide the kind of decentralized, responsive, and flexible recruitment service that we feel the federal Public Service must have.

We consider that the Royal Commission's recommendation is administratively unworkable. We also consider that if it were implemented our capability of discharging our statutory obligations would be seriously prejudiced.

In our view, the only sensible policy in this respect is the one now in force - to obtain pre-employment security clearances to the level required only for those individuals who are to be appointed to positions for which a need for security clearance has been identified.

March 11, 1969.

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