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Public Service Canada

Président
Fonction publique Canada

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CONFIDENTIAL

PRIVY COUNCIL
OFFICE

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October 24, 1977

BUREAU DU
CONSEIL PRIVE

Mr. P.M. Pitfield,
Clerk of the Privy Council
and Secretary to the Cabinet,
Privy Council Office,
Langevin Block,
Ottawa, Ontario.
K1A 0A3

Dear Michael,

During the past few months, we have received a number of complaints from public service employees or candidates for employment in the public service who have been denied employment or promotion or whose careers have been otherwise affected because of information contained in security reports.

In none of these cases was the individual concerned given full information regarding the nature of the charges nor was any opportunity provided to discuss them with departmental officials. Requests for further information which were made in at least two cases were denied.

It is appreciated that in some cases the nature and source of the charges and the sensitive nature of the position to be filled may make it necessary to deal with a security case in this fashion, but the cases to which I refer do not fall into this category and in our opinion they could have been handled in a way which would have given more consideration to the rights of the individuals concerned.

In examining these cases, it appeared that the level of security assigned to the related positions in most instances exceeded requirements. National security was not involved and a level of "restricted" or at most "confidential" rather than "secret" would seem to be appropriate. This may have resulted from a misinterpretation

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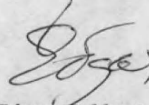
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of the present coding instructions or an exaggerated view of the importance and impact of the duties of these positions.

The P.S.C. is at a disadvantage in dealing with these complaints. The Deputy Head has sole responsibility for deciding the level of security classification of a position and also whether or not to accept an employee if there are negative comments in a security report. On the other hand, the Commission cannot very well refuse complaints or requests for information solely on these grounds since the merit principle may be involved. Also such an attitude would surely inflame the situation in some instances and lead to further problems, some perhaps with political implications.

I know that security has been under study for some time and that changes are contemplated in the present policies and procedures which will probably improve the situation somewhat. My purpose in writing is to inform you that complaints of this kind are increasing and to ask your support in seeking early implementation of the proposed changes.

Yours sincerely,



Edgar Gallant,
Chairman,
Public Service Commission.

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