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APPENDIX "B"

Recommendations of the Royal Commission on Security
-- Policy Implications

I. ORGANIZATION OF SECURITY

(a) Establishment of Security Secretariat

The recommendation is that there be established in the Privy Council Office "a formalized Security Secretariat with adequate status, resources and staff to formulate security policy and procedures in the context of general governmental policies, and more importantly, with effective authority to supervise the implementation of government security policies and regulations and to ensure their consistent application". It is suggested that the Secretary would require a director and at least three full-time officers. (para. 57)

Comment

While there may be arguments for a somewhat more formalized Security Secretariat in the Privy Council Office, the question will arise whether such a body should have the kind of authority over security operations in other departments and agencies which the Commissioners suggest. Security, like other aspects of administration, has as a matter of carefully considered policy been a departmental responsibility. The very nature of Cabinet government suggests that it continue to be so. Centralization of the supervisory and control aspects of the security function might well increase "efficiency" in terms of consistent application, but it might also reduce real efficiency by confusing the lines of responsibility, and also by creating a negative and adversary relationship between the Secretariat and departments and agencies.

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(b) Establishment of a Civilian Security Service

The recommendation is for the establishment of "a new civilian non-police agency to perform the functions of a security service in Canada". It should be eventually quite separate from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, generally without law enforcement powers, and might involve the organizational and operational detachment of the Directorate of Security and Intelligence from the R.C.M. Police as a first stage. It would have specific and public terms of reference, and the Head of the Service would be responsible to a designated Minister and would have direct access to the Prime Minister. The proposed terms of reference would give him considerable power and independence. (paras. 69,73,74,76)

Comment

This is the Commission's central recommendation concerning security organization, and its implementation, if that is decided, would require the most careful study and planning. It would meet with strong initial objections from the R.C.M.P. and possibly from other departments and segments of the public on the grounds that it would imply a serious lack of confidence in the R.C.M.P. to carry out their present tasks as a security service. It would also imply that the government had not hitherto given adequate attention to security organization and had thereby failed in its duty to Canada's allies as well as to the Canadian public. On the other hand, the arguments put forward for the creation of such a service are logical and persuasive, especially in terms of creating a more responsive and sophisticated organ of government in an area which touches the lives and careers of a significant number of Canadians.

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If this recommendation is to be implemented, it will be necessary to determine the proper relationship of the Security Service to the Department of the Solicitor General as well as to the R.C.M.P., and it will be of particular importance to present it publicly in such a way as to avoid damage to the morale and reputation of the R.C.M.P. as a valuable and honoured Canadian institution. The proposed terms of reference will also require careful examination, particularly in relation to the powers of the Head of the Security Service, to ensure a proper balance of authority and responsibility.

II. PERSONNEL SECURITY

(a) Security Check of all Entrants to the Public Service

It is recommended that all applicants for employment in the Public Service, whether or not they are likely to have access to classified information, have their names checked against subversive and criminal records and be fingerprinted. While adverse information need not result in rejection, the information would be made available to the employing department which could request further enquiries if they appeared necessary. (paras. 108,109)

Comment

The adoption of this recommendation would virtually obliterate the present distinction drawn between positions in the Public Service requiring access to classified information and positions which do not. Apart from the time, effort and costs that would be involved, it would almost certainly complicate and slow down induction procedures, and more importantly, would tend to give security considerations in employment an emphasis which they probably do not deserve. Without the application of mature judgement in all cases, it is quite possible that the application of these measures would result in a lowering of the quality of personnel entering the Public Service, in that many of the brightest applicants would consider such strictures to be largely irrelevant, if not oppressive, if they were applied as broadly as is suggested.

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(b) Security Clearance Procedures

It is recommended, over and above existing policies and procedures for security clearance, that the Security Service should provide much more detailed information on individual cases, should comment on the validity and relevance of the information provided, and make a formal recommendation on whether or not clearance should be granted. If a clearance is granted contrary to the recommendation of the Security Service, the Service should be informed and enabled to bring the decision to the attention of the Security Secretariat for review as to consistency. (paras. 111,116,128)

Comment

While there is no question of the value of the Security Service providing more thorough information, there may well be problems involved in their making recommendations as to clearance and in effect contesting departmental decisions in this regard. Again, the adoption of this proposal would call into question the principle of departmental responsibility, and would also tend to give the Security Service a "big brother" image in the eyes of the public as well as of other departments and agencies.

(c) Homosexuality

It is recommended that homosexuality should not always be a bar to employment in the Public Service, but should normally preclude clearance to the higher levels of classification and certainly preclude posting to sensitive positions overseas. (para. 122)

Comment

While it has for some years been established policy not to appoint known homosexuals to sensitive positions abroad, experience thus far has shown it to be feasible to employ homosexuals in quite senior positions involving considerable access to classified information after careful consideration of all the factors involved. Until it has been demonstrated that this fairly flexible policy has adversely affected security, there would appear to be no reason for change, and certainly not on the simple grounds of consistency.

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