



CANADA

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

CABINET SECRETARIAT

Annex "A"

CONFIDENTIAL

August 31, 1949.

Dear

Security Enquiries

The general policy governing the requirement for and the conduct of security investigations of individuals employed in the government service has been laid down in Cabinet Directives 4 and 4A, copies of which have been sent to you. As you are aware, this policy provides that responsibility for determining the need for investigations and for any action arising from a report rests with the permanent head of a department or agency in collaboration, when appropriate, with the Civil Service Commission.

Recently the Security Panel have reviewed, in the light of the past year's experience, the procedure for conducting security enquiries. The purpose of this letter is to seek your co-operation in reducing the number of requests for field investigations by the R.C.M. Police - about which Mr. Heeney wrote in his circular memorandum of February 23rd.

As you know, there are two kinds of security enquiries - the file check, which is an examination of available records, and the field check, which is a comprehensive investigation requiring a good deal of time and considerable care on the part of the Police. The former may disclose convictions for criminal offences, and affiliations with the Communist Party or subversive organizations; (in this connection, the records available to the R.C.M. Police are now quite comprehensive with regard to both criminal and subversive activities). The latter is useful mainly in serving to establish the character, habits and personal associations of the individual under investigation and, except in rare instances, discloses nothing of a subversive character which would not otherwise be disclosed by file check.

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Our review has shown that field investigations are asked for in a number of cases where their value is questionable - for instance, on persons of long standing and good record in the government service, and who are known personally to the deputy head. It would seem, therefore, that a clear report following a full field check has come to be regarded as the only criterion for establishing the reliability or loyalty of an employee.

The large number of requests for field investigations has placed an undue strain on the facilities of the R.C.M. Police, with the result that they have found it increasingly difficult to conduct these investigations with the discretion, thoroughness and fairness to the person concerned which are severally required.

In the Panel's view, present practices could be modified without prejudicing the security of the government service if greater discretion were exercised by deputy heads in determining the need for full field investigations. A formula along the following lines is suggested as a means of meeting the present difficulties encountered by the Police, while still maintaining the standards of security necessary to meet the known risks.

- (a) Vulnerable departments, agencies and branches
(Those in which special precautions should be taken to see that in all positions only those who are reliable from the security point of view are employed).
 - (i) Employees with long service (say ten years or more) and satisfactory record - a file check should normally be sufficient unless the deputy head considers that circumstances warrant a full field investigation.
 - (ii) Employees with short service (say less than ten years) about whose character the deputy head is satisfied, through personal knowledge - a file check and certification as to character by the deputy head should be adequate.
 - (iii) All other employees having access to Top Secret and Secret information should normally be the subject of field investigations.

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