

SECRET

Ottawa, October 17, 1952.

Memorandum for Mr. GarsonSecurity Investigation of Government Employees

You will recall that I spoke to you about the attached directive on the security investigation of government employees on October 11. You indicated that you would be prepared to speak to the matter when it came up in the Cabinet. As it is now on the agenda for the next meeting you may wish to have the following details concerning the position:

1. The new directive is being submitted because experience has shown that we cannot in fact carry out the security procedures which the policy set out in Cabinet Directives Nos. 4 and 4A requires. A further attempt to implement Directives 4 and 4A would only mean diverting the present limited manpower of the R.C.M. Police away from what we consider the far more important tasks of penetration of the communist party and Soviet and satellite intelligence services. Indeed this work of penetration is in itself perhaps the most important security measure we can take.

2. The main changes in procedure are set out in the covering memorandum from the Chairman of the Security Panel. A field check is no longer an essential requirement for the granting of clearances to Secret and Top Secret information. However, the R.C.M. Police do make a very considerable number of field checks (2020 in the period July to September 1952) in the case of persons who will have access to particularly sensitive information. There is almost always a field check when information on file about a person is inconclusive or where circumstances seem to justify it. It seems probable that in the past a field check has been rated rather too highly as a security measure. It hardly ever provides anything more than information on a person's character, his habits and sobriety. This is often useful. But it will almost never provide intelligence showing a person to be a foreign agent. One of the first requirements of a successful spy in Canada is an apparently blameless family life.

3. The least satisfactory change is that in many cases clearance may be now given for access to Restricted and Confidential information without a file check being made by the R.C.M. Police. This is not an ideal situation, but unless the resources

of the R.C.M. Police registry are considerably enlarged it represents a calculated risk which we have no alternative but to accept. It may be of interest to note that, working under procedures recommended in the new directive, the R.C.M. Police made approximately 14,000 file checks in the three-month period from July to September of this year.

4. The alternative to the new directive would be to leave the present one in effect and simply continue to fall short of meeting it. The Panel considered that it would be quite undesirable for the government to be in the position of failing to meet a standard that it itself laid down as being necessary.

R. G. Robertson,  
Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet.