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MEMORANDUM TO THE CABINETSecurity Screening of Government Employees

Cabinet Directive No. 24 of October 16th, 1952, contains at paragraph 11 the following direction:

"11. Before a person is appointed to a permanent position in the public service he must be made the subject of a file check by the R.C.M. Police, if this has not already been done. It will be the responsibility of the Civil Service Commission to ensure that the necessary file check has been carried out, and the joint responsibility of the Civil Service Commission and the department concerned to ensure that there is no security objection to the granting of permanency on the basis of information so provided."

2. The provision was originally included on the recommendation of the Security Panel, to avoid the embarrassment which might arise if a civil servant after being made permanent was required to have access to classified information and was then found as a result of an investigation to be unfitted to handle classified information.

3. As a result, very many persons in the public service who will never have access to classified information are being made the subject of a file check. Experience shows that cases in which embarrassment is caused are rare, and the Security Panel is therefore of the opinion that since the risk is slight the present procedure places an undue burden on existing facilities for investigation.

4. The Security Panel therefore wishes to recommend that paragraph 11 be deleted from Cabinet Directive No. 24 to be replaced by the following:

"A person to be appointed to a permanent position in the public service will not normally be made the subject of security screening. But whenever a person to be appointed to such a position is, in the opinion of the deputy minister or head of agency concerned, likely to be required eventually to have access to classified information, that person shall before being given a permanent appointment be made the subject of a fingerprint and file check if this has not already been done."

R.B. Bryce,
Chairman of the Security Panel.

Privy Council Office,
Ottawa, April 22nd, 1955.

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