

S E C R E T  
CANADIAN EYES ONLY

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRIME MINISTER:

Report of the Royal Commission  
on Security

*underneath*

In connection with the memorandum which I sent you last evening on this subject, I am enclosing herewith your copy of the original Report of the Royal Commission on Security. You may find it useful to have it with you in considering the points made in the memorandum and in the Appendix which summarizes and comments upon the various recommendations set out in the Report.

*DFW*  
D.F.W.

Privy Council Office,  
December 17th, 1968.

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December 16th, 1968.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRIME MINISTER:Report of the Royal Commission on Security

A meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security and Intelligence has been arranged for 4.00 p.m. on Thursday, December 19, in the Privy Council Chamber, to ~~consider the policy aspects of the publication of an~~ "expurgated" version of the Report of the Royal Commission on Security. In addition to yourself as Chairman, Ministers present will be Mr. Sharp, Mr. McIlraith, Mr. Cadieux, Mr. MacEachen, and Mr. Turner. Mr. Pelletier would be pleased to attend if you would authorize another Minister to take his place in the House, as it is his duty day. Mr. Drury will probably be at the meeting of Finance Ministers, and Mr. Hellyer is expected to be in Toronto. Mr. Jamieson has also been invited, but may not be in Ottawa. The only officials present will be Mr. Robertson, Commissioner Lindsay, Deputy Commissioner Kelly and possibly Mr. Côté as Deputy Solicitor General. I believe Mr. Robertson intends to speak to you about Mr. Côté's attendance. I will be present as Secretary.

As you are aware, Mr. Beavis and I together with the Secretary and the Research Director of the Royal Commission have prepared and distributed to members of the Security Panel (but not yet to Ministers) an expurgated version of the Commission's Report. In tentatively deciding which portions of the full Report might be deleted in the interests of national security, we bore in mind two considerations. In paragraph 13 of their Report, the Commissioners made the following statement:

"Finally, we have become convinced that effective security arrangements must have a firm basis in public awareness and understanding, ~~that the level of Parliamentary and public debate on these subjects~~ would be considerably improved if more information were made available, and that a good deal of information could in fact be made available without detriment to the public interest. For these reasons, we

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feel that the government should make public as many of the arguments and recommendations contained in this Report as may be revealed without in its opinion damaging the public interest."

In addition, in reporting to the House of Commons on November 1st that the Report had been received and was being studied, you made the following statement in response to questions by David Lewis (a photocopy of the total exchange is attached at Appendix A):

"I would hope that whatever expurgated version we did publish would have the certification of the Commissioners themselves, that they considered the deletions to be deletions that are made in the interests of national security only and for no other reason."

On this basis, it was considered appropriate to delete from the Report only those references, views or information

- (a) that would damage Canada's relations with allied and friendly countries;
- (b) which the Commissioners had committed themselves not to reveal publicly;
- (c) that might reveal such defensive techniques and procedures as would be directly helpful to a potential enemy;
- (d) that appeared to demonstrate exploitable weaknesses in our system of security defences;
- (e) that might jeopardize the usefulness of, or unduly embarrass, identifiable individuals;
- (f) that, as a matter of government policy, had not been revealed in the past; and
- (g) that appeared to be particularly delicate or unresolved matters of government policy.

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It would appear that the portion of the Report to which the Solicitor General and the R.C.M. Police take greatest exception is the section of Chapter III entitled "Operations and Investigation", paragraphs 59 to 78 inclusive. Here the Commissioners set out their analysis of the recruiting, training and operational methods of the R.C.M. Police, and conclude that the inherent inflexibility of a police structure weighs heavily against its effectiveness as a security organization. They then set forth their arguments for "the creation of a new non-police agency to perform the functions of a security service in Canada", including possible terms of reference. You will recall that when the Commissioners presented the Report to you on October 30, they made quite clear that they regarded this as their central and most important recommendation. It is clear by implication that they would not certify the completeness of any version of their Report which did not include both the recommendation and the arguments on which it was based.

As I understand it, the Solicitor General and the R.C.M. Police are suggesting that the government not publish any version of the Report. We have been unable to find any precedent in Canada for such action, and British practice in relation to comparable reports has been to publish a "sanitized" version with an introductory statement along these lines:

"The Report ... as originally submitted included a few specific references which in this published version are omitted or amended in the interest of national security."

In one instance, in 1956, a Report of the Conference of Privy Councillors on Security was made in confidence to the government, on the basis of which a White Paper was issued giving the substance of the Report and including a number of specific recommendations.

Apart from the public and Parliamentary expectation that the government will publish a version of this Report, there are a number of considerations that render publication highly desirable. Perhaps the most important is the question of public confidence in the government, which must be based on as full an understanding of the issues as is possible. It is equally important that

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the government demonstrate its confidence in the people, by sharing as broadly as possible a responsibility which no democratic government can arrogate to itself alone. Refusal to publish any version or portion of the Report would arouse serious suspicion as to what the government was attempting to hide, and the pressure would eventually be such that, very much on the defensive, the government would be forced to reveal the nature of the Report - if indeed it had not already leaked, as it surely would. It is of enormous importance that every effort be made to remove much of the suspicion that has tended to surround security matters, not to add to it.

Because security policies and procedures affect the lives of so many Canadians, both directly and indirectly, it can be persuasively argued that the people have a right to know as much as possible about these procedures. Indeed, without such knowledge on the part of the public, the government hardly has a right to expect public support of its security policies. The Report of the Royal Commission provides the best opportunity Canadians have had in over twenty years to study and debate these matters, and indicate what their wishes are before the government commits itself to the implementation of any or all of the Commission's recommendations. Such debate would seem to be of particular importance at present, when we are reconsidering our foreign and defence policies in the midst of rapidly changing attitudes about the nature of our society and our place among the other nations of the world.

If these views commend themselves to you, and appear to prevail at the meeting of the Cabinet Committee, the most desirable result of the meeting would be a decision in principle to publish an expurgated version of the Report, and an instruction to the Security Panel to examine the version already prepared, with a view to recommending to the Cabinet Committee and eventually to the Cabinet that such a version or a modification of it be published as soon as possible. The Cabinet Committee might also consider the desirability of the government stating, at the time of publication, that implementation of the main recommendations would take into account public and Parliamentary responses and reactions to the published Report.

  
D.F.W.

Privy Council Office,  
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