

External Affairs and the Problem of Security Clearances

The following are some additional points and references you might wish to add to your account:

Granatstein and Stafford describe Howard Green as "unsympathetic" to homosexuals, which meant that Robertson where possible handled the matter without letting the minister know. But the under-secretary's sensitivity to the plight of those named as security risks did not prevent him from taking what he deemed to be appropriate action. As the authors put it, the Gouzenko case had made Robertson "exquisitely conscious of security and its needs. To him, the security of the state was paramount and, although he agonized over each case that came before him, his usual conclusion was that doubt had to be resolved in favour of the nation's security."

-J.L. Granatstein and David Stafford, Spy Wars: Espionage and Canada from Gouzenko to Glastnost (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1990). pp. 113-114. Most of the discussion about homosexuality focuses on Watkins, but the work of the Security Panel and attitudes within the Canadian government are briefly touched on. See pages 103-105.

The descriptions of Green and Robertson echo those found in Granatstein, A Man of Influence: Norman A. Robertson and Canadian Statecraft, 1929-68 ([Toronto?]: Deneau Publishers,

1981), p. 333, which you have already cited.

Robertson was also a voice of moderation on the Security Panel. On October 6, 1959, the panel met to consider a paper on the subject of "character weaknesses," particularly homosexuality, and concluded that there should be no change to existing security policy as defined by the cabinet directive of December 21, 1955. Robertson did not dissent from the conclusion, but was inclined to the view that the report "exaggerated the risk" posed by employing homosexuals in sensitive positions. "It was his view that the assessment of an individual for a position of trust involved a mixture of considerations, and pointed out that a weakness such as homosexuality might exist in an individual of great discretion and with a brilliant capacity for public service. In many cases, he said, the security dangers of the sexual propensity might well be neutralized by other aspects of the person's character."

Minutes of the 68th meeting of the Security Panel, October 20, 1959, CSIS, AI request no. 117-91-88.

The documents released under Access to Information point to the RCMP as the engine driving the effort to identify homosexuals in the public service. A report prepared by Bryce for the prime

minister and the minister of justice on "Security Cases Involving Homosexuality" notes that during 1959, "the R.C.M. Police accelerated their program of investigating public servants about whom allegations of homosexuality had been made, and obtained Ministerial authority to proceed with investigation in both sensitive and non-sensitive departments and agencies." The inquiry, which was expanded to include information on homosexuals outside the public service, identified some 460 "confirmed, alleged or suspected homosexuals" in the public service by December 1960, of whom about a third resigned or were dismissed. In only one of the cases was there evidence of an attempt to blackmail an individual "for intelligence purposes."

There was some effort to rein in the police. A special committee of the Security Panel, composed of Bryce, Robertson, the commissioner of the RCMP and the chairman of the Civil Service Commission, met to draw up guidelines which would set the criteria under which the RCMP would be obliged to inform individuals and departments of their findings. A draft report for the prime minister and minister of justice was prepared, but it is not possible to determine from the documents released whether or not the guidelines were approved. (The RCMP's annual reports down to 1969 continue to bemoan the Security Panel's failure to provide terms of reference for their investigations.)

- Draft memorandum from R.B. Bryce, chairman of the Security Panel, to the prime minister and minister of justice,

Dec. 19, 1960, CSIS, AI request 117-91-88.

The RCMP persisted in their zealous quest throughout the sixties. Beginning in 1959, they kept a list of names of known or suspected homosexuals across Canada. By 1969, the "Directorate Index System" as the list was called included some 9,000 names. When the force identified a government employee it would, when it deemed necessary, forward to the department responsible an "adverse report based on homosexuality". In 1962-1963, for example, the RCMP filed only 29 such reports, down from 85 in the previous year. The relatively poor showing was blamed on formerly reliable informers who had begun to exhibit "an increasing reluctance to identify their homosexual friends and associates." The force had better luck in subsequent years; in 1965-1966, for example, 97 adverse reports were forwarded to government departments. The documents released do not give the departmental distribution of these reports.

- RCMP, Directorate of Security and Intelligence Annual Reports, 1959-1969, CSIS, AI request, 117-91-88.