

SECRET

SECURITY
PANEL
DOCUMENT

SP-75

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECURITY PANEL

Security Screening of Government Employees;
Review of Procedures, Reporting Methods, etc.

It has been the practice of the Security Panel to review periodically the arrangements for carrying out security investigations in respect of Government employees. As more than a year has passed since the last major changes in procedure were adopted (vide Chairman's letter to deputy heads of Government departments and agencies, dated August 31, 1949), it is desirable that the situation be examined again with the object of correcting ~~proved~~ weaknesses in the system. The following points are suggested for discussion:

- (1) Re-examination of the criteria used to determine the security status of Government employees;
- (2) Re-assessment of vulnerable and non-vulnerable departments and agencies to permit a more realistic appraisal of the security risks involved;
- (3) The degree of responsibility to be assumed by Deputy heads of departments and agencies in dealing with adverse reports on individual employees;
- (4) Procedure to be followed in serious cases likely to involve the transfer or dismissal of the employee concerned;
- (5) Necessity for limiting the volume of requests for full field investigations, consistent with the maintenance of adequate security standards; and,
- (6) Methods of reporting on bad security risks.

Actually, the problem is limited to a consideration of the adequacy of present arrangements for handling proven security risks (i.e., cases involving re-allocation, transfer or dismissal) the volume of requests for full field investigations, and the methods of reporting on individual cases.

It will be recalled that on August 31st, 1949, a letter was sent to the Deputy Heads of all Government departments and agencies proposing a simplified method of determining the requirement for full field investigations which, it was hoped, would lessen the volume of work to be undertaken by the R.C.M. Police (See Annex "A" attached). In some cases, the Deputy Head has declined to assume responsibility for certifying even senior employees, and the volume of requests going forward to the R.C.M. Police is still large enough to tax the capacity of the Force. As the R.C.M. Police may have to assume new commitments in the not distant future, this aspect of the problem must be reviewed in an endeavour to reach an effective compromise.

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It has been suggested that the present method of reporting on adverse cases is unsatisfactory, in that the Deputy Head of the department or agency in which a security risk has been identified does not ordinarily have a written record of the facts in the case. The present system of submitting "A", "B" or "C" letters on individual cases does protect sources of information, but at the same time there is a possibility that decisions may be made after a lapse of time and without studying all the relevant facts. A solution is proposed by the R.C.M. Police in a memorandum addressed to the Security Panel (see Annex "B").

It has been the policy of the Government to refrain from establishing cumbersome appeal procedures, with all their administrative complications, and up to the present there has been no reason to alter this policy. However, it may be desirable to review this aspect of the problem in the light of past experience and to consider whether any material change would be justified in anticipation of any arbitrary decisions that might have to be made in the future.

These are the main points to be considered in a general review of the policy and procedures relating to the security screening of Government employees, but others may be suggested in discussion. The Panel is asked to review this matter and decide whether any major changes in policy are desirable at the present time.

E.F. Gaskell,
Secretary.

Privy Council Office,
Ottawa,
October 20th, 1950.