

Cuppl

U-10-13

Cuppl

S-100-13

Cuppl

S-100-4-C

POT. SCOTT

Ottawa, March 16, 1954.

N. A. Robertson, Esq.,
Canadian High Commissioner in the
United Kingdom,
Canada House,
London, England.

Dear Norman,

You may be aware of the series of questions that Mr. Fulton, the Conservative Member of Parliament for Kamloops, has asked in the House of Commons during the past few weeks regarding the operations of the Security Panel and, generally, the security measures adopted by the Government within the Public Service. These questions have been answered individually.

I, and other officials concerned with this matter, rather dislike this piecemeal approach. I think it would have been better had a general statement been made covering the whole field of security within the Public Service much along the lines of the statement made by the Prime Minister in December, 1951, in connection with the Jackson incident, although any statement that would be made now would naturally cover more ground than the one made in 1951. No such general statement was made, however, because of the Prime Minister's absence although it may be felt after his return that it would still be useful for him to do so.

These happenings have led us to review our security procedures in some considerable detail and I would very much like to draw on your advice and experience, particularly with regard to one aspect of the problem.

Mr. Fulton has made as much as he could of the fact that there is no appeal procedure in the Public Service security set-up. I am satisfied, as no doubt you were at the time you were concerned with this problem, that no thoroughly satisfactory appeals

.....2

machinery can be established because it is generally impossible to reveal to the person about to be dismissed or transferred the evidence upon which such dismissal or transfer is based. However, it seems to me that we might possibly devise some compromise which would not only have the appearance of equity but which might well, I believe, actually give a greater degree of protection to the individual.

I have recently discussed with a member of the U.K. Security Service stationed in Washington the appeals procedure which has been set up in the Public Service of the United Kingdom. This gentleman is forwarding to us some additional information as to how this machinery functions. I am not suggesting for the moment that we should copy the British system. What I had in mind, rather, was the setting up of some sort of advisory body, consisting possibly of three persons, whose advice the head of a department would be required to seek before reaching a decision as to whether a person in that department should be either dismissed or transferred on security grounds. I am very concerned over the fact that, at present, although the Police make available to the heads of departments and, on occasion, to the Security Panel the facts that they have been able to discover about a given person, the sources of such information, save in very exceptional circumstances, are not revealed to anyone. If the three-man advisory board I had in mind were established, I would suggest that all the information in possession of the Police, including identification of sources, should be made available to such Board in order that it may reach an independent conclusion as to how the information supplied by the Police should be assessed. I have not reached even a tentative conclusion as to whether the members of such a Board should be civil servants or distinguished ex-civil servants or persons completely outside the Service.

I have also been considering whether it would be advisable to modify our present practice of not telling persons transferred or dismissed on security grounds the true reason for their dismissal or transfer. It seems to me, at first glance, that it might be fairer to the persons involved and that it would not jeopardize our security arrangements if the persons concerned were informed not of the detailed evidence that has prompted their dismissal or transfer but simply that they were being denied access to classified information on one of the following three grounds:-

.....3

- 3 -

- (a) Because of communist associations;
- (b) Because of certain human weaknesses; or
- (c) Because certain circumstances over which they may possibly not have any personal control may make them a target for blackmail.

A person thus notified would then have an opportunity to make whatever representations he saw fit. These representations would be made available to the Advisory Board together with the information supplied by the Police. After careful examination of both, the Board would be required to make a recommendation to the head of department with whom would rest the responsibility for making the final decision.

Do you think that something along these lines would be a useful modification of our present security procedures? I might add that I have discussed this in some detail with Mr. Pelletier and Mr. Dwyer of this office but not, as yet, with the R.C.M. Police. It would, consequently, perhaps be wiser for you to

since it might well come back indirectly to the R.C.M.P. in Ottawa who might feel that this constitutes an indirect vote of no confidence which, of course, it is not. My only purpose in making these not too well thought out suggestions is to explore every possibility of improving our present system.

Another matter with which we have recently been concerned is that of persons who, without having access to classified information, are in a position to exert an influence on the public mind. Our attention was recently focused on this particular aspect of the problem when a difficult case was brought to the attention of the Security Panel. This case involved a television producer of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation who was suspected of having active communist affiliations. At the present time, as you know, access to classified information is denied to persons on grounds of either disloyalty or unreliability. It has now been suggested that anyone whose loyalty can reasonably be put in doubt should not be given access to jobs where they can exercise a direct influence on the public mind, i.e. C.B.C. and

.....4

National Film Board producers, Indian school teachers, etc. This general problem was discussed at the Security Panel recently. There were those who favoured such an extension of our screening processes and there were others who remained in some doubt. Personally, I must confess that I am somewhat fearful of the extremes to which this argument can lead if pursued ad absurdum.

I would be very grateful if you could find the time to discuss the general security problem with those concerned with these matters in London, and to let me have your views on the U.K. system as well as your suggestions as to what might be done here to improve our own system.

With warmest personal regards.

Yours sincerely,

R. B. Bryce,
Secretary to the Cabinet.