

COPY

CONFIDENTIAL

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE
HEADQUARTERS

Ottawa,
June 15, 1953.

Mr. P.M. Dwyer,
Secretary, Security Panel,
O t t a w a.

Re: Security Screening of Personnel -
Applicants and Employees Generally
(Federal Government)

1. For some time we have been concerned over the increasing volume of applications for security clearances, resulting in a considerable backlog and a delay in being able to supply these clearances within a reasonable length of time. We have been aware also that the delays which prevent a Department or Armed Service from employing a man have resulted in applicants obtaining employment elsewhere and therefore being lost to the Service or Department.
2. Therefore we have been surveying our methods of operation, our filing system and other procedures in an effort to accelerate security clearances. In this survey we have had the assistance of the Organization and Methods Division of the Civil Service Commission, which organization has been making a survey of Special Branch records in conjunction with the general survey of the Headquarters records system. The procedures for the future which follow hereunder have been made in consultation with the representatives of the above-mentioned Civil Service organization.
3. In the past a name check has been made through subversive and criminal indices. Where fingerprints are supplied a check through our criminal Identification Branch records has also been made. In the latter cases we feel that as complete a check as possible results. In cases where fingerprints are not supplied, our name check has been, as mentioned above, made against subversive records and those criminal records maintained at Headquarters as distinct from those maintained at Divisional Headquarters in the various Provinces.
4. Only approximately 2% of criminal cases handled by this Force in Canada are contained in our Central Registry at Headquarters, Ottawa. The records of most criminal offences, i.e. offences against the Criminal Code, are maintained at Divisional level, except the more serious cases such as treason, murder, rape, narcotics and counterfeiting. Included in this 2% are the records of offences against Federal Statutes other than the Criminal Code, such as Customs and Excise Act, the Indian Act, etc.
5. However, in approximately 95% of cases of indictable offences where fingerprints are taken there is a fingerprint record at this Headquarters. This includes fingerprint records from most police forces in Canada, and this record is maintained in our Identification Branch separate from our Central Registry. A positive check can be made of fingerprints only if the fingerprints are supplied. We do not consider the fingerprint records a

A0785153_1-000052

CONFIDENTIAL

safe or suitable source for a name check only.

6. With respect to non-indictable offences, i.e. intoxication, common assault and other minor offences, where fingerprints are not taken (the Law does not provide for fingerprinting in these cases), no record of any sort is maintained at this Headquarters. Such a record would be maintained at a Divisional level if the offence occurred within Mounted Police jurisdiction, or would be recorded in the Provincial Police records of those provinces which maintain a Provincial Police, or in the city or other municipal police records, where the offence occurred within the jurisdiction of such force. In those cases the mere supplying of a name to check against such records cannot be a positive check due to the great similarity of names which would occur.

7. It will be seen, therefore, that a check at Headquarters without fingerprints for other than straight subversive traces can be checked against only about 2% of the criminal offences committed in this country. In view of the terrific volume of requests for records checks now being received, we do not feel that the check against criminal indices at this Headquarters is worth the effort, delay, etc. which is involved. We are convinced that to endeavour to continue the check against all available records at Headquarters as is now being done does not, in the first place, give a true picture, and now can result only in increasing delays and unsatisfactory service to those Departments whom we are endeavouring to assist. It is our firm opinion that in order to overcome the existing backlog a check at this Headquarters should be made only against subversive indices. This will be a straight security check, and a negative check would indicate that the subject had no subversive record. It would not necessarily indicate the lack of a criminal record, as we now feel that a proper answer to a request for a criminal record can no longer be made without the submission of fingerprints.

8. For the past two weeks we have conducted a test run by checking incoming requests for records checks against our subversive files only. In two weeks time this has resulted in an increase in output of 40% over previous volume.

9. At the moment however this increase is felt only within the Headquarters of the Force and cannot become effective to our consumers until further steps are taken. In short, the checks are being made so fast that the Central Registry is unable to open files and cards quickly enough to keep up with the increased 40% volume. This has resulted, so far as our consumers are concerned, in only about an 18% over-all increase in the past two weeks.

10. In order that the full 40% increase in volume can be made effective to the Departments concerned, it is our considered opinion that, in all cases where a

- 3 -

negative check results (and these are approximately 98% of the over-all incoming volume), we should simply stamp the form "No adverse record" and return the form to the Department concerned without opening a file or an index card at this Headquarters. Of course in cases where an adverse record is revealed a file would be maintained. Requests for field checks would, however, in all cases require a file to be opened, and we would as well search against all criminal records kept at Headquarters.

11. By this latter-mentioned procedure we feel that the acceleration in replies to Departments would be immediate and that as soon as the backlog was cleared up here Departments could anticipate reasonably quick replies to requests for records checks. We would like to put this procedure into effect forthwith and this will necessitate advising the Security Officers of Government Departments concerned that henceforth their forms will be returned to them stamped "No adverse Record" wherever a negative check occurs and that no record of this form will be maintained at R.C.M. Police Headquarters. We would appreciate your assistance in advising Government Departments of this new procedure. It is realized that some discussion may be required by the Security Panel concerning our first proposal to check against subversive records only, but we do not think that our second proposal, i.e. to return negative check forms without maintaining a file, creates any problem. We hope, therefore, that Government Departments can be advised as quickly as possible regarding our second proposal, even if you feel that the first proposal may require further discussion. We could then start at once returning the applications very quickly.

12. There are several points which may arise as a result of the suggested procedure, and I point some of these out hereunder in order to anticipate possible questions.

13. It would be understood that a request for a recheck would be dealt with at this Headquarters as a new application, as there would, of course, be no record of the original check here at this Headquarters.

14. We would propose to instruct Divisions that where the name of a new Party member or other subversive comes to their attention they should give priority to ascertaining his place of employment and report same as quickly as possible to Headquarters. Should such a report reveal that a subversive was working for a Government Department, we would advise the Security Officer of the Department concerned. This would do away with the main reason for keeping files on all security checks, which was for the purpose of checking new subversive names against existing records.

15. We have never been in a position in the past to do much in the way of rechecks after a man has been employed for two or three years. We think under the new

These are supposed to be automatic

CONFIDENTIAL

- 4 -

system this may be possible and, while it is yet too early to make a complete estimate, there is every possibility that within a reasonable length of time we might be able to ask Government Departments at regular intervals of two or three years to supply us with a nominal roll of their employees which we can check against our subversive records to ascertain if any of these people have appeared in subversive records since they were originally cleared.

16. In conclusion I would point out that the above suggested changes are only a few of many which are being made in connection with our entire subversive record system, all of which we are satisfied will give us quicker access to information, will make more frequent checks against our files possible, and will speed up the transfer of information received from investigators to readily accessible records. It might be added that the [REDACTED] so far as we can find out, [REDACTED]

17. We are having several enquiries made regarding the American system, and we have had an opportunity to peruse the new United States Security regulations. With the volume of security clearances now going on in the United States, we are satisfied that it would be practically impossible for the American security authorities to follow the new regulations to the letter unless they are prepared for an increase of staff, files, and general correspondence on a scale which, it is suggested, in this country would be uneconomical, unworkable and would not justify the element of risk to be taken.

18. It has always been our view that we must give top priority to the maintenance of our subversive records to see that they are as up-to-date as possible for our whole security screening system can be no better than the files on which it depends. We feel that the proposals mentioned above together with others which are being put into effect will give us more time and will relieve more staff for the essential purpose of keeping our knowledge of the subversive movements at a maximum.

19. We are most anxious to put these measures into effect as quickly as possible and if discussion should be required by the Security Panel we would earnestly request that a meeting be called at the earliest possible moment.

(Geo. . McClellan) Supt.,
Officer i/c Special Branch.

A0785153_4-000055