

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. BRYCE

Investigation of Human Weaknesses

I thought I should summarize for you the points raised in my discussion yesterday with Bella on this question. Our discussion was based on the case on which Transport has asked our advice, and Bella stated that he would clarify from their files the reasons why Transport was not informed earlier of the allegations which had been made about their employee, and attempt to provide further information.

On the general problem, Bella showed deep concern at the fact that he had not been given any specific guidance or instruction as to how and how far his Directorate should proceed in investigating cases such as this. He understood that the matter had been discussed by the Commissioner, the Minister of Justice and the Prime Minister, as a result of which he was verbally instructed in general terms to "go ahead" with investigation of all cases in the public service. On this basis he has since the latter part of 1959 been accumulating information, primarily through interviewing the persons concerned and getting from them the names of others of similar propensity, whether within the service or outside. Each of the persons named is then investigated, and when the evidence is fairly conclusive, the person concerned is in turn interviewed. Bella states that well over 90% of those interviewed are most cooperative, and admit that the allegations are true. Some have provided scores of names of other persons similarly inclined, and the R.C.M. Police are surprised at the patterns that emerge. They very often get confirmation of an initial allegation from several quite independent sources, indicating a sort of "community" of these persons across the country.

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The Police appear to be in some doubt as to the stage at which a department should be informed of an employee's implication, but Bella's own inclination is to inform departments as soon as the investigation shows fairly conclusive results, whether the employee is in a sensitive position or not. This is not yet being done consistently, however. Their present procedure is to enter all such information in a separate key-sort filing system in preparation for future requests for security investigation prior to clearance, at which point the requesting department would be given the information.

Bella is also concerned that, lacking any formal guidance or direction from the government as to how far to proceed, the intensity of recent investigations of this kind has required him to take expert men off their regular duties in the counter-espionage field, and he is in fact faced with a fairly serious shortage of staff. He would very much like to have the considered advice of the Security Panel or the Cabinet as to the kind of service he is required to provide, and to have this problem put in proper perspective in relation to other security functions of his Directorate. He would be happy to provide us with whatever information we require on their findings as well as on the investigative problems involved, and seems to be aware of the tricky complications involved in adverse publicity through leakages of information.

I told Bella that I would discuss with you the possibility of having this question discussed by the Panel, with a view to providing him with more specific instructions, either from the Panel or the Cabinet. We did not discuss the obvious difficulties that might arise over getting lines of authority crossed, because I got the impression that he was not fully aware of what the reactions of the Ministers concerned had been.

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As to how we proceed in this, I think your suggestion of last evening that you speak to the Commissioner is a good one. Depending upon his views, it might then be possible to have the matter discussed by the Ministers and senior officials most directly concerned, or to get the approval of the three Ministers for the matter to be considered by a quorum of the Security Panel - yourself, Robertson, the Commissioner and possibly Mr. Hughes. I think it is important not to let our present machinery break down in a matter such as this, and I think the machinery can be adapted to the wishes of the Ministers concerned. It is also important, I feel, that we establish clearly among the organizations primarily concerned the means by which this problem can best be handled, from the security viewpoint as well as those of government prestige and service morale.

  
D.F.W.

February 23, 1960