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Solicitor General
FOR APPROVAL AND SIGNATURE

FROM
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Deputy Solicitor General

SECURITY - CLASSIFICATION - DE SÉCURITÉ
OUR FILE/NOTRE RÉFÉRENCE 6920-3-4, P-4100-B 6926-7-6-1, P-4147E
YOUR FILE/VOTRE RÉFÉRENCE M6962
DATE JUN 10 1984

SUBJECT FILE DESTRUCTION - PROPOSED RCMP RESPONSE
OBJET TO MR. SVEND ROBINSON, M.P.

1. On March 19, 1984, Mr. Robinson wrote to you concerning several aspects of the file destruction policy. Under covering letter dated May 15, 1984, the Commissioner has provided you with a suggested reply to Mr. Robinson.
2. On May 22, 1984, you appeared before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs and answered questions on this subject from both Mr. Robinson and Mr. Thacker (Tab A). You will recall that Mr. Robinson was apparently somewhat confused as to the McDonald Commission's estimate of the number of files on individuals as opposed to the number of entries (on index cards) in the name index. McDonald used the figure of 800,000 files on individuals and 1.3 million names in the index (Tab B).
3. The Director General Security Service has provided an update on the number of entries in the Service's Name Index System and of files on individuals (Tab C). Following the recent authorized destruction program for files and associated index cards, the totals, as of May 1984, are reported as approximately 1,000,000 entries (index cards) representing 506,614 files on individuals. As explained in the last paragraph of the Director General's letter, the number of index cards is larger than that for files, due to the difficulty of correctly identifying some individuals by means of a single index card.
4. You may consider it advisable not to correct Mr. Robinson on this point, since any subsequent or further discussion of the 800,000 figure may tend to focus discussion on numbers - a subject which is best avoided if possible. As you may recall, the 800,000 figure was never an actual total, but only a rough estimate - a matter which you may judge it better not to try to explain at this juncture, given the literal interpretation that the media and others have placed on it.

5. The proposed RCMP response is generally appropriate. I recommend that you reply to Mr. Robinson along the lines suggested but incorporating the following changes.

- (a) deletion of the reference to not all the files being "opened inappropriately" (paragraph 1);
- (b) reformulation of references to the methods of destruction (paragraph 2);
- (c) deletion of paragraph 3, and instead enclose a copy of your policy of February 11, 1983; and
- (d) rewrite the first sentence of paragraph 4 to emphasize the point being made in the RCMP draft.

I attach a reworked draft for your consideration containing the adjustments referred to above.



Fred E. Gibson

Attach.