

Supply—Justice

individuals in connection with various matters. We, of course, only carry out such functions when we are requested to do so by an organization such as a government or a department which is properly entitled to request them.

The important point to bear in mind is that it is not the function of the R.C.M.P.—indeed, I can state on the basis of knowledge I have acquired that they are scrupulous in avoiding the exercise of this function—to assess the acceptability or the unacceptability of an individual on the basis of security. It is the function of the police exclusively to collect information as to what have been the activities of this person, what the record shows, and then they pass on that information to the agency concerned which makes its assessment as to the suitability or otherwise of the person for the employment for which he is applying or for citizenship or whatever the case may be.

The police themselves do not judge and render a verdict whether or not a man is suitable. They simply report what are the facts, and with respect to what I call such routine investigations it is true that on occasion we may employ the services of relatively young constables because it is to that extent a routine investigation. But the security and intelligence work of a type which involves assessment or judgment of what is going on is, of course, invariably done by specially trained and relatively senior personnel of the force.

Mr. Fisher: If the basis of the judgment is material gathered, as the minister seemed to indicate, by young and inexperienced people—

Mr. Fulton: I said that occasionally we may use a young and relatively inexperienced constable for the purpose of a routine investigation to establish the facts, not to form a judgment.

Mr. Fisher: What about the question of the facts which seem to determine the judgment?

Mr. Fulton: Those are reported to the agency making the inquiry, and it is left to that agency to reach their own judgment on the basis of the facts reported.

Mr. Fisher: How long are facts kept on file? For example, take someone who 15 years ago was a member of the Finnish organization and may be completely away from it now. I have to come back to this point because in two cases I can think of I can go to people who have been turned down with respect to bringing relatives into the country from behind the iron curtain or with regard to having a citizenship application

approved, and I can get affidavits from a number of people as to their good citizenship. I know one person who was turned down who had been recommended very strongly by the provincial Conservative member for Port Arthur. I should like to know more about the standards that are applied. How can we be sure that some information that no longer has any relevance to the state or political attitude of the person involved is not taken into consideration?

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Chairman, it is the duty of the force to make a report to the government or department of the government in every case where we are called upon to give information. As I say, we do not attempt to influence the decision of the department as to the judgment it may come to on the basis of the facts we may report. If we are asked to report on an individual and we have a file on that individual, then as I conceive it it is the duty of the police to make the report available; but I know on the basis of my experience, from discussions with my colleagues and in another capacity in another department, that my officials and I myself feel free to exercise a judgment and that judgment will be influenced in all cases, I would assume, by the length of time that has elapsed since the last report of any association such as that which my hon. friend indicates, and will also be influenced by the presence or otherwise of affidavits from responsible persons indicating that these matters are all well in past years and that there is a new pattern established at the present time. It still remains the duty of the force, if we are called upon to do so by some properly authorized person, to report upon the facts available with respect to an individual.

Mr. Fisher: I will not quarrel with that, but in all the statements I have read in connection with this matter the minister has said that information in the files cannot be released, for example to members of parliament. You cannot even find out whether there are files on members of parliament. But is there not some way we can discover what your standards are for keeping information, and what you consider properly subversive or dangerous to the state? Could not some kind of general memorandum be prepared so we could get some idea of what is involved when a person is turned down? It hardly seems to me that you have to be secretive as to your standards.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Chairman, I think my hon. friend is getting into a realm which again is not the job of the police because, as I say, we do not form the judgment. There are, of