

I look forward with the Prime Minister to an opportunity at the next session for a more full discussion of the recommendations of the royal commission. I join him in expressing our appreciation to the commissioners for working so conscientiously and so well in such a difficult area as this area of security.

The Prime Minister has not indicated what the attitude of the government will be towards all the recommendations of the royal commission, and on several important recommendations he has indicated the government has substantial reservations. For example, it is clear that the government does not accept the proposal that there is to be established a new non-police agency to perform the functions of a security service in Canada. The Prime Minister hopes to realize the advantages the royal commission sees in this proposal by making appropriate modifications to the structure of the R.C.M.P. I might have some doubts as to whether the mounted police, as it is presently constituted and organized, lends itself very readily to the sort of modifications to which the Prime Minister refers.

• (2:30 p.m.)

My initial reaction might be that we are more interested in considering the proposal for a special agency, though I can see certain difficulties in this regard. But I look forward to hearing a further explanation in the house by the government when we have our discussion, presumably in the fall. In the meantime, there will be an opportunity for further consideration and discussion throughout the country.

Another recommendation is that the Security Review Board receive and consider periodic reports from the head of the security service and have authority to draw to the direct attention of the Prime Minister any matters it considers appropriate. The government in effect seems to reject this proposal. Personally, I would be inclined to favour the recommendation that would require the head of the security service to report periodically to the review board. However, this is also something that can be discussed further.

I gather that the government has also withheld judgment on the proposal that a quite wide variety of decisions, including transfers, denial of promotion, and citizenship and immigration decisions made for security reasons, be made subject to review by the proposed review board. I think this is a quite important recommendation. I can appreciate

*Statement by Prime Minister on Security*

that it requires extensive study to work out a practical method to give effect to it. I should have liked to hear the Prime Minister endorse it, at least in principle, today. I hope he will deal with it more fully when we next have an opportunity to discuss it.

It is interesting to recall that what gave rise to the appointment of the Royal Commission several years ago was not any evidence that our security apparatus as such was inadequate or ineffective, but it was an incident which raised questions as to how surely the rights of Canadians are safeguarded in the process. At one point in his statement the Prime Minister mentioned "one of the concepts most basic to our form of government, that of ministerial responsibility". The fact is that on matters relating to our national security, parliament has always accepted some considerable limit on its right to demand information and full disclosure by the government. So far as any of us know, the security apparatus and procedures of our country over the years—at least since 1945—have been effective. The Prime Minister referred to this today. The Royal Commission has not found any evidence to the contrary.

We all have an interest in maintaining the effectiveness of the security operation at a high level. At the same time, parliament will want to insist on assurances that the security operation, much of which must be carried on outside the purview of parliament, is conducted with extreme care for fairness and common sense. We would therefore, at this stage at least, welcome the Security Review Board, the clarification of security regulations and other initiatives that would strengthen the security of the state and reinforce the protection of the individual.

I am sure that members of parliament accept the necessity that much of the security operation is conducted outside our purview. What would be cause for grave concern would be any thought that much of the operation is beyond the ken of the ministry or the Prime Minister; that there are not ministers, elective and responsible members of government, to whom the entire security operation is an open book, who have continuing access to everything that is going on in that area, and who give proper, responsible, political, civilian direction to the operation on a continuing basis. None of us would want to see a security operation in this country running under its own steam and answerable only to itself—a government, so to speak, within the government. The very decision as to what affects security and what does not, what must