

Questions

The third paragraph is as follows:

Will the government now give answers to questions in the house seeking information as to the nature and extent of its security program, including answers to the questions following?

This question is answered by the answers to Nos. 2 and 7. They are a description of Canadian parliamentary practice, and how it works.

The fourth question is:

What agencies of government have been appointed for the purposes referred to?

The answer is that the civil service commission is charged with the duty of determining the qualifications of candidates applying for positions in the public service and for making normal inquiries regarding their character and competence. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police are charged with the duty of making special investigations relating to security. All ministers and the departments and agencies which they direct have the duty of determining whether or not persons whom they employ and retain in employment are reliable from a security point of view. The security panel has been established as an interdepartmental committee for consultation between officials whose duty it is to assist ministers on security matters, and for the preparation of general questions in this field for the consideration of the government.

Then, the fifth question:

To what minister are they responsible?

The answer is that the civil service commission, in the making of appointments, acts within the scope of the Civil Service Act and is responsible directly to parliament through the Secretary of State.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police are responsible to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Garson) and report through him to parliament. Each department, in the administration of its own personnel, is responsible to the minister who is the head of that department. The government as a whole has and accepts responsibility for all procedures or policies of general application which may arise from the work of the security panel. Normally it is the Prime Minister or the Minister of Justice who answers in parliament in regard to these matters, but if they are especially concerned with one department it might be the minister of that department who would feel called upon to answer in parliament.

Question No. 6 reads:

Who are the officials for whom the minister is answerable in parliament in this field?

Well, the minister is answerable in parliament for the decisions made and any actions

taken by him or in his department by any of the officers of that department. Question No. 7 reads:

What are the activities of these agencies for which the minister concerned will give answers in the house?

Well, the extent and nature of the answer to be given in the house have to be determined in respect of every question that arises.

Then, question No. 8 reads:

What is the total number of government employees of all categories dismissed, released from government service, or transferred to less sensitive positions in the government service, for security reasons, since January 1, 1947?

I understand that by "security reasons" the hon. gentleman is concerned with reliability with respect to loyalty, and on that assumption the answer is as follows: Reasons for the transfer or removal of government employees because of unreliability include not only indications of communist or fascist activities or associations, but also indications of weakness of personality or character or habits, and circumstances that render a person susceptible to pressure or blackmail, or unintentional indiscretions. Security reasons involving risks of disloyalty are only part of the circumstances giving rise to certain removals or transfers. To segregate the cases of suspected unreliability with respect to loyalty, it would be necessary to analyse the circumstances of each case where there has been a dismissal or a transfer to determine the degree to which security reasons of that kind were responsible for the removal or the transfer, and that would make it, if not impossible, very difficult to draw up a list that could set out in a mathematically accurate way the number of cases—and they are not very numerous, you know—where there have had to be removals or transfers because of indications of unreliability with respect to loyalty to Canada.

It is practically impossible to give the exact number of employees of all categories dismissed, released or transferred for such security reasons, and if that list were established it might even be found to be not in the best interests of the public to make that kind of list public.

Here hon. members will realize that whenever anything like that has to be done, it is of course done because we feel it is necessary; but we feel sorry, whenever there does arise that kind of case, that action has to be taken, and we endeavour to act as a discreet employer and not to give any publicity that would be unnecessarily harmful, because, as has been said more than once here, we do not attempt to find guilt. We merely attempt to discharge our responsibility to be careful. We