

*Supply—Justice*

whose behalf, in the last analysis, these measures have been instituted.

In many ways the secrecy which tends to surround defensive security measures has clouded the homely fact that these measures are essentially a part of good personnel administration. As the Prime Minister pointed out a moment ago, the purpose of our security program is preventive, not punitive. In deciding whether it can have sufficient confidence in an employee to trust him with its secrets, the government is not deciding whether or not he is guilty of anything nor is it dealing with a person's rights as a human being. No one has a right, and I emphasize that, to have access to secret information any more than he has a right to be someone's trusted private secretary. The employer has a right, indeed in most cases a duty, to entrust his secrets and give his confidence only to a person whom he can trust. In withholding that trust he does not infringe the rights of such a person nor accuse him of a crime. Some inference of untrustworthiness in such a case may be implied or conveyed privately. In some cases, as a very last resort, it may have to become public. In all cases, however, the essential question is simply whether an employee can be relied upon in a position of confidence.

Each department and agency of the government is responsible for the safekeeping of the secret information it holds and must administer, and is therefore required by direction of the government to establish beyond reasonable doubt the loyalty and reliability of its employees who have or may readily obtain access to such secret information.

In the first instance, such employees are asked to provide certain basic information about themselves and about close relatives who may influence them or cause them to be influenced in a manner which would bear on their loyalty or reliability. They are also asked now to give the names of persons as character references. This basic information is provided through the completion by the employee or prospective employee of what is called a personal history form. I might add here that this form, which over the years has been subject to revision in the light of growing experience, has recently been reviewed and revised by the various officers in order to establish loyalty and reliability through future and further investigation. In addition, the employee is required to be fingerprinted in order to determine through a comparison with the central fingerprint records of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police whether he has any record of criminal activity of a nature which would bear on a judgment as to his reliability. If there is no such record,

the fingerprints may be returned to the employee at his request.

Next, the completed personal history form is forwarded by the department or agency to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police with a request that it be checked against their records to determine whether there has been any indication of participation in communist or fascist organizations or association with persons suspected of espionage. In some cases a further request is made that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police conduct a detailed investigation of the background of the employee concerned. This necessarily involves conversations with former employers and others who can be expected to be able to assist in judging the trustworthiness of the individual in question.

In providing the results of these investigations to the requesting department or agency the Royal Canadian Mounted Police make no comment—I should like to bring this particularly to the attention of the house—give no opinion and come to no conclusions to be drawn from the information which they provide and give to the department or agency. They simply pass it on with any assessment they can give as to the reliability of the sources of the information. The conclusions as to the relevance of that information and the weight to be given it in light of all the circumstances are solely the responsibility of the employing department or agency and the minister in charge of it.

I should like to emphasize this as it appears to be an unfortunate misconception on the part of many Canadians, both in this house and elsewhere, that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police proffer or are asked for advice or opinions concerning the significance of the information they are asked to provide. In fact, quite the opposite is true, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police have taken extreme care not to interfere in any way with the formulation of a decision, which is the heavy responsibility of the employing department or agency. Advice in arriving at decisions is available to departments through the interdepartmental security panel, and the Prime Minister has given some information on that panel.

I said a moment ago that the responsibility of arriving at a decision as to an employee's suitability to be given access to secrets was indeed a very heavy responsibility. This is so because the senior officers concerned, and eventually the minister responsible, must ensure that a proper balance is struck between the safety of vital information on one hand and the fair and just treatment of the individual concerned on the other. It is in the making of this decision and in its consequences that the difficulties and dangers lie.