

908109-001

NOTES OF A MEETING WITH

JOHN STARNES

DECEMBER 8, 1978

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Those present: The Commissioners  
Peter Russell  
John Graham  
John Edwards  
Ross Goodwin  
H.R. Johnson

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He started out first by talking about

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He is aware of a past occasion, before his time,

He thinks it would ensure the independence of the Director General of the Security Service if you gave him tenure.

There should be a much closer relationship between the two agencies. The Committee system

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TOP SECRET

helps. The degree of co-operation depends a lot on the individuals involved. He had a lot of difficulty with

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There is no reason why an oversight board could not be set up (perhaps made up of three people) especially to advise on targeting. In order for an oversight board to work there would have to be a change in attitude that cannot take place while the Security Service is in the RCMP.

You cannot combine in one person (the Commissioner of the RCMP) all of the talents required to run a police force (i.e. police talents and administrative talents)

He does not know what intelligence bank the military have.

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The Security Service isn't the most important  
element in the intelligence community in a lot of areas.

He does not think the Government is capable of running  
an offensive intelligence service. They have had difficulty in  
running the Security Service. They do not have the political will  
to run an intelligence service. If they had the political will and  
knew what they were after and then started to build it up slowly and  
carefully they might be able to do it. It would have to be under  
the Secretary of State for External Affairs. He asks what it would  
be used for. Would it be for defense purposes only?

Can SIS?

He doesn't see any  
foreseeable government in Canada able to set up such an offensive  
intelligence capability.

The experiment tried, in having the Security Service  
in the RCMP but increasingly autonomous and civilian in nature, was  
worth trying, but it will not work. There are real distinctions to be made  
between a police force and a security service. Lockhart's article says  
it all.

He thinks that the Government wanted to change the RCMP  
but didn't have the nerve. The situation today is that you have  
a branch of the RCMP handling the Security Service. If you had

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a separate Security Service you would have to have a special branch in the RCMP. The separation would have to be phased in over several years. The new service would have to be attractive in that (a) there would have to be increased salaries, (b) there would have to be a good superannuation, (c) they should make arrangements that no one serves over twenty years.

At no time in all the briefings that they gave to the various Ministers was there ever any suggestion that they should not be doing something that they said they were doing.

A separate Security Service could have a solid core from the present Security Service. You could skim off the cream. It would have to have a much smaller proportion of police in it. The existing Security Service is far too big. You could reduce the number and improve the quality.

There should be a distinct ministry set up responsible for security. It should not be under the Solicitor General or the Attorney General. You can't have the same minister handling the Security Service and the RCMP.

He thinks that the Cabinet Committee System is a disaster from the point of view of security.

The currency of the classification system has been debased. It is important that some areas should be identified clearly as involving national security under any freedom of information legislation.

To the best of his knowledge, there was very little attempt by the Security Service to manipulate the Government.

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16 December 1977.

Mr. Justice David C. McDonald,  
Commission of Inquiry Concerning  
Certain Activities of the RCMP.

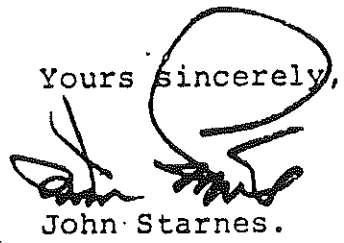
Dear Mr. Justice McDonald:

Now that the Commission of Inquiry over which  
you have been appointed to preside has begun hearings,  
I thought I might write to express my desire to appear  
before you.

In anticipation of appearing before the Commission,  
I prepared a statement which might be given at that time.  
On reflection, however, it has occurred to me that it  
might be helpful to you and to your colleagues to have  
the text in advance. Among other things, it also might  
assist the Commission in deciding which parts of my  
testimony about these matters should be heard in public  
and which parts, if any, should be dealt with in camera.  
I am, therefore, attaching a copy together with supporting  
appendices.

Since the document and nearly all the appendices  
are classified Top Secret, I have arranged to deliver it  
personally to the Commission's Counsel, Mr. Howard.

Yours sincerely,



John Starnes.

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SUBMISSION BY JOHN STARNES TO COMMISSION OF  
INQUIRY CONCERNING CERTAIN ACTIVITIES OF THE  
R.C.M.P.

Gentlemen:

I would like at the outset to say that I welcome very much this opportunity to appear before you. Among other things the Commission of Inquiry provides the first proper forum I have had in which to discuss the work of the Security Service of the RCMP and particularly during the period I was responsible for it.

the events  
in question occurred between eight and five years ago. Moreover, in my own case because the Head of a Security Service is privy to so many sensitive secrets, I made a conscious and considerable effort to forget as much as possible.

I have been encouraged, however, to discover that the records of the Security Service contain a wealth of material including detailed memoranda I did of certain conversations I had with the Prime Minister and the Minister. These latter memoranda, because of their sensitive nature, were kept apart from the regular files of the Security Service. Happily they have been kept and have proved useful in helping me piece together various events of the early 1970's. Obviously, there was also a great deal which went unrecorded but there is sufficient on file to substantiate a number of points I wish to make and to compensate for imperfect recall on my part and on the part of others.

If the Commission agrees I would like first to deal with the L'Agence de Presse Libre du Quebec affair.

I returned to Ottawa from Halifax on Tuesday the 10th of October 1972



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Awaiting me was a telegram from Superintendent Forest, the Officer in Charge of the Security Service in Montreal informing me for the first time that the three police forces had entered the premises of L'Agence de Presse Libre du Quebec and had removed a number of documents.

As you are aware, L'Agence de Presse Libre du Quebec had been a source of considerable concern to the Security Service and to La Surete de Québec and the Police du Montréal for some time. The Security Service had had the Agency under surveillance for months. first signed a warrant on the 18th of May

Intelligence

suggested that the Agency was being used in various ways to promote the activities of the FLQ,

However, none of this, in my view, warranted the kind of action which appeared to have been carried out by the Combined Anti-Terrorist Squad in Montreal.

Not surprisingly, five years later I cannot now recall details of the various conversations which obviously ensued with the Commissioner and others.

By good fortune, however, I am able to document my reactions in a very precise manner since they were recorded in two messages dated the 12th and the 13th of October 1972 which I sent to Superintendent Forest, the Officer in Charge of the Security Service in Montreal. The messages were sent in high-grade cypher and marked Top Secret and Personal. I should like to table these with the Commission together with related correspondence. (Appendix A)

That I am able to document my reactions to the incident so precisely is lucky since I might just as well have decided to handle such a delicate matter through a direct confrontation with Superintendent Forest, which probably would have gone unrecorded.

Indeed, if this aspect of the matter were not now documented one would have to depend on individual recall which,

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after so many years, would be imperfect. For example, if I had made the points orally to Supt. Forest which I made in my telegrams, since he is now dead, one would have to rely upon my recollections and my word alone.

Among other things my messages to Supt. Forest, show clearly that; (a) I knew nothing of the operation before it took place; (b) had I known about it, for various reasons, including the fact that it was illegal, I would not have approved of Security Service involvement, and (c) I intended to bring the matter to the attention of Ministers.

Since the messages were drafted in haste I would like to caution against reading into them things which were not intended. For example, when I refer to the need to have Headquarters informed in advance of "such operations", I was not referring to the kind of activity carried out against L'Agence de Presse Libre du Quebec but to any legally sanctioned Security Service operations of a sensitive nature. I also refer to a prior conversation I had had with Inspector Cobb. I cannot now recall the subject matter of my discussion with Insp. Cobb in September 1972, but I believe it had to do with the importance of keeping Headquarters informed in advance of various sensitive operations.

On the 12th of October Mr. Choquette issued his extraordinary statement disclaiming any responsibility in the matter by any of the three police forces. At the same time he announced that he had ordered the Montreal City Police to carry out an investigation of the complaint lodged by L'Agence de Presse Libre du Quebec.

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There can be no doubt from my message to Supt. Forest of 12th October that it was my intention to inform Ministers of the Security Service's involvement. That this was not done immediately was due to the simple fact that Jean-Pierre Goyer was not available.

A general election had been called to take place on Monday October 30th, 1972 and the Minister was busy electioneering in Quebec from early October until early November.

My personal appointments book for the period (which again by chance was not destroyed) shows I saw the Minister at 10:30 A.M. on October 3rd but that I did not see him in the period between the 10th of October and the 18th of October

Incidentally, my absence for these purposes at that time had been specifically approved by the Minister sometime in advance.

I did not return to Ottawa until the weekend of the 28/29 October and to the office until the 30th, the day of the general election.

When the APLQ letter of October 9th enquiring if the RCMP had been involved was received in the Minister's office, in his absence it was referred by Mr. Cameron to the RCMP for comment. This was a quite normal procedure to follow with correspondence from the public about matters affecting the RCMP.

No advice about how to respond to the APLQ letter was offered the Minister prior to my departure on the 18th of October since it was hoped that this could have been discussed directly with him.

Subsequently, in a letter dated October 26th the RCMP suggested the Minister should make no reply to the letter. I do not know why this advice was offered and on that date. The files appear to be silent on these questions.

In a statement he made to the House of Commons on June 21st, 1977, Jean-Pierre Goyer said;

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"My agenda indicates that I would have raised the matter with the Commissioner and the Director of Security Services (sic) of the RCMP on 6 November, 1972. I was not informed of RCMP involvement in the break-in at this meeting nor at any subsequent meeting with the police. I was advised not to acknowledge the letter because the theft of documents referred to in the APLQ letter fell under the jurisdiction of the provincial authorities and I was informed that la Police de Montreal was investigating the incident.

"I am sure that I was not told of RCMP involvement in the break-in. The former Commissioner and former Director of Security Services (sic) claim they would be surprised if they had not told me verbally. But neither the Commissioner nor the Director of Security Services (sic) of the RCMP remember actually telling me about RCMP involvement in the incident. They both state the matter was a very serious one and very unusual. Do you think Mr. Speaker, they would remember discussing it with me? Do you not think that had they wanted to inform me about it they would have done so in writing?"

The use of the conditional tense by the Minister in referring to the date when he said he raised the matter with us in November suggests he is not certain about it. My personal appointments book does not record my meeting with the Minister on November 6th. It does record my having other appointments that day.

I believe that in fact the day we met was Friday, November 3rd,

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On the same day he also placed his initials and the figures "3.11.72" written in his own hand, on a document listing various audio surveillance installations across Canada covering the previous five-month period.

† My appointments book does not show a meeting with the Minister on November 3rd. I suspect the reason being that his appearance in Ottawa that day was unexpected and that a meeting with him was hastily arranged and probably took place after noon. Obviously there would have been an unusual number of matters which would have accumulated during the relatively long period he appears to have been absent from Ottawa prior to the election on October 30th. Some of these matters clearly would have concerned Security Service business. As I indicate subsequently it was the practice to leave sensitive Security Service questions to be dealt with after normal RCMP business was finished and officials other than the Commissioner and I had withdrawn.

In his statement to the House of Commons the Minister asserted that such an important matter would have been recorded in writing and discussed with the Deputy-Solicitor General and the Director, Security Planning and Research Group in his department. On this score he said;

"The RCMP's standard way of dealing with important information was to convey it to me in writing. I outlined the procedure this afternoon but let me repeat that many days I received up to five or six documents on police matters. Decisions and policy directives were recorded in writing and such documents were initialled by me. The RCMP is methodical, efficient and thorough in keeping its records of discussions and decisions. The Solicitor General Department's (sic) files and those of the RCMP contain no written report to me on the APLQ break-in".

The Minister went on to state;

"As I pointed out this afternoon, neither the Deputy-Solicitor General nor the Director,

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Security Planning and Research Group, were made aware of RCMP participation in this operation before March 16, 1976. The established practice called for their being informed of important questions pertaining to the RCMP's activities, to allow them to assist me in following up on such matters. Normally, at least one of them attended my meetings with the police. Neither one remembers ever hearing about RCMP involvement in the break-in at the APLQ".

The Minister referred to RCMP business as such and his statement on that score was accurate. However, it was not correct to give the impression, as he did, that this was also the case insofar as the handling of sensitive Security Service business was concerned. Indeed, almost the opposite was the case. It was the exception rather than the rule for the Deputy-Solicitor General or any member of his department to be present when Security Service matters of a sensitive operational character were being discussed. Moreover, a percentage of matters of this kind were never committed to paper and such documents as were involved, e.g., warrants for telephone interceptions or papers relating to audio surveillance operations were never retained by the Minister or seen by any officials of his department.

There were, of course, numerous documents dealing with a variety of less sensitive matters which were sent to the Minister through the office of the Director, Security Planning and Research Group to ensure appropriate handling. Such documents usually dealt in general terms with broad policy questions, e.g., the role of the RCMP on university campuses, general assessments of different threats, e.g., international terrorism or Security Service views on proposed wiretapping legislation. Occasionally, these matters might be discussed at our regular meetings with the Minister but usually they were handled through written exchanges. Such correspondence never dealt with sensitive information about individuals, sources or specific operational matters requiring the Minister's knowledge or approval.

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These cautious and sensible methods of doing Security Service business were accepted by Jean-Pierre Goyer and by both his predecessor, George McIlraith and his successor, Warren Allmand. They also were clearly understood by the Deputy Solicitor General and by the Director, Security Planning and Research Group. Sensitive Security Service matters were only discussed between the Minister (and occasionally the acting Minister), the Commissioner and me or my representative which can be established from a study of various memoranda of discussions with the Minister, some of which subsequently I will be tabling. Meetings with the Minister usually took place once a week when he was in Ottawa. Discussion of Security Service matters took place after other RCMP business was finished. The time given over to such discussion varied from one-half hour to an hour.

Jean-Pierre Goyer had this to say in the House of Commons on the 21st of June concerning our meeting in early November;

"Why did I not specifically ask if the RCMP was involved in the break-in? First I received an inquiry about an illegal break-in from a group whose reputation and credibility Hon. members can evaluate themselves. I found it hard to believe that the RCMP could have participated in an illegal break-in. I had no knowledge of the RCMP ever having taken part or even having planned to take part in illegal activities...."

"Secondly, when I discussed the APLQ letter with the RCMP, the Quebec Justice Minister had already stated publicly that no police force was involved in the break-in. He had prime responsibility for investigating the incident;

he had done so and was unequivocal in his conclusion. Was it reasonable for me to doubt his conclusions? The RCMP did not tell me of RCMP involvement in the break-in, the Quebec Justice Minister stated bluntly that no police force was involved; it was thus clear to me that the RCMP was not involved in the incident. I had no reason to suspect the conclusions of the Quebec Minister of Justice as false and thus had no reason to ask the RCMP if they had been involved in the incident. No member of this House would have reacted differently. When I was told that the whole matter was being further investigated by the Montreal Urban police, I was further reassured that Justice would take its course."

"The Quebec Justice Minister's statement denying that any of the three police forces were involved in the theft of documents were never brought to my attention as false."

In his statement to the House of Commons on June 17th, 1977, Francis Fox said, inter alia;

"Commissioner Higgitt and Mr. John Starnes also recall having discussed the October 9th letter with the Solicitor General on a date they cannot precisely establish. They state that they do not remember having briefed the Solicitor General of the RCMP's participation in the unlawful entry of the APLQ premises. They add that they would be surprised if they had not verbally advised the Solicitor General in this regard."



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When we met with Francis Fox in May and June of 1977 neither of us was able to recollect much about the incident. This was not surprising given the fact that the event had taken place about five years earlier, and we had had no opportunity in the interim to study the files. It was unfortunate that our initial and obviously imperfect recollections of the affair became enshrined in the ensuing public debate. The only effective way we could have entered the debate would have been through the news media which neither of us considered responsible or appropriate. Indeed, both of us told Francis Fox that we would refuse to discuss the matter with journalists.

It would appear that neither Jean-Pierre Goyer, the Commissioner nor I made a record of our conversation about the APLQ affair which obviously must have taken place on November 3rd, 1972. This was not surprising. There were matters from time to time which were discussed with the Minister and which neither he, the Commissioner nor I sought to record. This will be evident from a study of various documents having to do with other matters which are attached as appendices.

The Minister stated that he raised the APLQ matter with us for the first time in early November. Clearly the discussion included

his acceptance of the written advice given him on October 26th to make no reply to the APLQ's letter to him of October 9th, 1972. I cannot recall, five years later, what precisely was said during our discussion on November 3rd. However, it will be appreciated from this account why I personally would be surprised if, during the discussion, the Minister had not become aware of the RCMP's involvement.

If I may I should like now to go back to the latter part of 1969 when it was first suggested by the government that I might head the Security Service, or as it was then known, the Security and Intelligence Directorate of the RCMP.

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It will be recalled that the first Royal Commission on Security rendered its report in 1968. After lengthy deliberations at various levels of the government, the Prime Minister spoke on the subject in the House of Commons on 26 June 1969, setting out his views and those of his Cabinet colleagues on some of the recommendations made by the Royal Commission.

I do not know the nature of the discussions between 1968 and 1969 which obviously took place between Ministers and senior officials and between the then Commissioner of the RCMP and Ministers. No doubt, if it seems relevant to this inquiry, a reasonably accurate reconstruction could be made from a study of Security Service files, the files of the Privy Council Office and from discussions with ex-Commissioner Lindsay and ex-Deputy Commissioner William Kelly.

The government rejected the principal recommendation of the Royal Commission which was for the establishment of a Security Service separate from the RCMP and civilian in character. They elected instead to appoint a civilian to head it and to keep the Security Service within the framework of the RCMP.

Not long after, on September 23, 1969, I received a telephone call from the Secretary to the Cabinet inviting me to lunch that day at the Rideau Club to discuss a "matter of some urgency". I should perhaps add that I was at that time an Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs responsible for personnel and administration in that department.

When we met, Gordon Robertson quickly came to the point. The Prime Minister wondered if I would be willing to present myself as a candidate for appointment as Commissioner of the RCMP. I need hardly say I was taken aback. I said that while I was flattered it was not a position to which I had ever aspired and I would like time to reflect upon the idea and its implications for my future. Gordon Robertson explained that this might not be possible since Ministers planned to interview candidates that same afternoon. He mentioned there were two other candidates, Len Higgitt and a more junior member of the Force who had been chosen, chiefly, I recollect, on the grounds that he had some university training. I agreed to appear, although reluctantly, and with serious misgivings since I disliked making such a decision in haste.

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I never discovered why I was considered a likely candidate. Apart from having a relative of the same name who had been Commissioner of the RCMP in the 1920's, I had had little to do with the Force except on the intelligence and security side of its work.

This led to my being involved closely with the Security and Intelligence Directorate of the RCMP.

A couple of hours later I was asked to go to Gordon Robertson's office, adjacent to the room in which the Cabinet usually meets in the East Block. In due course, I was led into the Cabinet room through a connecting door to find myself placed at the end of the green-baize table facing the Prime Minister and a gaggle of Ministers. It reminded me rather of the Quebec Rhodes Scholarship board before which I had appeared many years earlier - with the difference that the Prime Minister was presiding instead of. As I recall the other Ministers present included Leo Cadieux, John Turner, Bud Drury, Mitchell Sharp, George McIlraith and Gerard Pelletier.

I cannot recall now the details of the interview which hardly are relevant. However, given the circumstances of my appearance I do recall being taken aback by the final question put to me by the Prime Minister - "Why was I interested in becoming Commissioner of the RCMP?" I remember replying that I was not at all sure I was interested having first heard of the idea only a few hours earlier!

That evening I received a telephone call from Bud Drury, a friend of many years standing, asking me if I could come to his office the following morning, which I agreed to do. The next morning's discussion was lengthy and rambling. Among other things he told me that Ministers had concluded that it might be premature to appoint a civilian to head the RCMP, a view which I did not dispute. Eventually he said the Prime Minister wondered if I would be interested in becoming the first civilian to head the security and intelligence activities of the RCMP. I said it was not a job I coveted.

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Obviously it was of lesser importance in hierarchical and other terms than the Commissioner's. Moreover, from my previous and considerable experience of this side of the Force's work under several different Commissioners, I knew it to be fraught with difficulties which certainly would not be lessened by the appointment of an outsider and a civilian at that. I said I also was not unaware of the problems which would be presented in my relationships with the Commissioner, if, as seemed likely, he was to be chosen from one of the other two candidates who had appeared before Ministers the day before. Apart from all this I was not especially attracted to the idea of leaving the Foreign Service in which I had spent 26 years of my life. I told Bud I was not enthusiastic and it was left that I would reflect upon the matter and get in touch with him later.

After a good deal of soul searching and upon the advice of persons whose opinion I trusted, such as

Drury I would accept the job. At the time I asked Gordon Robertson if I would still be considered a candidate for the Commissioner's job at some future date and I received such an assurance in a confidential letter from the Prime Minister dated November 20th, 1969, a copy of which I should like to table with the Commission. (Appendix B)

It may sound mawkishly old-fashioned now but my principal motivation in accepting the job was a belief, in retrospect, perhaps naive, that I might be able to contribute something to the task which, even at that time, clearly had become very much more important, difficult, complex and challenging.

I should like to add one very important point. During my interview with Ministers on September 23rd, 1969, I made it quite clear that I believed the government's decision not to create a security service separate from the RCMP was the right one. Subsequently, when it was suggested I might head the Security Service I reiterated this view. Indeed, I made the point that I would not accept the job if it entailed my having to create a separate security service.

I had no argument in principle with the recommendation of the Royal Commission that the Security Service should be separated from the RCMP and for the reasons so cogently set out by them. There are good theoretical arguments in favour of such an arrangement although these tend to break down when they are considered in relation to Canada's enormous size, unique constitutional framework and the arrangements for implementation of the Criminal Code. It seemed to me at the time that the compromise chosen by the government was an experiment worth trying providing always that the long-term aim was sufficiently defined and enlarged upon. Complete separation certainly was, and still is, a viable alternative but the timing and the modalities are at least as important as the principle itself.

I would not have agreed to attempt any precipitate move toward the complete separation of the Security Service from the RCMP. My reasons at the time were quite practical. I knew enough of the problem to realize that to start from scratch to build a civilian organization would be a monumental task fraught with difficulties and dangers. I do not know what influenced the Royal Commission to recommend that a separate service be established. Perhaps they were impressed by the British and Australian experience and they felt that somehow a Canadian service could escape the severe growing pains which both those agencies went through in achieving a separate and civilian identity.

For someone like myself coming fresh to the job to have to replace the tremendous body of expertise and experience represented by the members of the Directorate of Security and Intelligence, 54% of whom in 1969 were Regular Members of the Force would have been quite impossible. Perhaps some of these could have been persuaded to sever their connections with the RCMP but there was no assurance of this. In addition there would have arisen at once vital questions involving funding, safe accommodations across Canada and liaison arrangements with foreign intelligence and security agencies so necessary to a purely defensive organization like the RCMP Security Service. At least as important would have been the conclusion of arrangements for a number of other essential matters. For example, the transfer of the various records and dossiers without which any security service simply could not operate. Since important, often essential, information on those files would have been derived from foreign intelligence and security

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agencies their agreement to such a change of custodianship would have had to be negotiated. The transfer under appropriate safeguards of the different installations located in RCMP buildings across Canada having to do with

Also involved would have been acquisition of the numerous agents and informants who had been carefully recruited, developed and maintained by the Directorate of Security and Intelligence under the most rigorous security precautions over many months and even years.

Finally, and by no means least were the great advantages of being able to recruit members for the Security Service from among regular members of the Force. This ensured a steady stream of recruits who had met strict security screening standards and whose capabilities already had been tested. These considerable advantages would be immediately lost if a separate agency were created.

Apart from those who might agree to sever their connection with the Force and become civilian members of a separate security service all other members would have had to be recruited from elsewhere, thus increasing greatly the ever present worry of any security or intelligence service - infiltration by foreign intelligence services.

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Following my acceptance of the job I met with George McIlraith in October of 1969 to work out for the first time the modalities of the appointment; my title and status, the preparation of a public statement about the appointment and the nature of the relationship which should exist between the Minister and me and between the Prime Minister and the Commissioner and me.

At the outset George McIlraith encouraged me to deal directly with the Prime Minister whenever I thought this desirable or necessary. We chose the title of "Director General" since it was widely in use in the public service and it also was employed abroad and thus would be recognized internationally. It was suggested I also should have the personal rank of Deputy Commissioner in an attempt to reinforce my position within the RCMP. Detailed arrangements about salary, pension rights and method of appointment were left to me to work out with the Commissioner and the Deputy Minister of External Affairs and the Treasury Board.

I mention these mundane matters because subsequently they were to prove important in terms of my ability to carry out my mission which was never spelled out except in the general terms of the Prime Minister's statement of June 26, 1969 to the House of Commons.

All these matters and preliminary briefings of all kinds had been completed by the time I took over the job at the beginning of January 1970. In fact, however, my position as a Civilian Member of the Force meant that I was subject to the same rules and regulations and code of discipline as regular members except that I lacked certain powers they possessed. For example, although Director General of the Security Service, I was not a peace officer or a Justice of the Peace under the terms of the RCMP Act and thus was unable to sign warrants for submission to the Minister. Similarly I was not able myself to take disciplinary action against any member of the Service. Such action could only be taken by a regular member under the authority of the Commissioner.

While undesirable, this situation did not bother me unduly. Indeed, given the desire of the government to appoint a civilian and to emphasize his civilian status it is difficult to see how the matter could have been handled very differently without making substantial changes to the RCMP Act itself.

I concluded that given my background and experience I probably could be of most use to the Security Service in areas in which I was knowledgeable and already had some useful contacts. For example, I knew my way around the bureaucratic jungle. I had extensive contacts among senior officials in other government departments, the Privy Council Office and the Treasury Board and I knew a number of Ministers personally.

I had an intimate knowledge of the intelligence and security community in Canada having had some responsibility for the very extensive reorganization of the interdepartmental committee structure which took place in the 1958-62 period. I also felt my very recent experience in handling financial, administrative and personnel matters in External Affairs might be useful in reshaping the Security Service in the way the government appeared to wish to have it done. Since I had no expertise or experience in the detailed conduct of security operations as such, I decided these were best left to my deputies and the specialists who obviously had had years of experience and could be depended upon to cope with day to day problems. Moreover, it was clear to me that the "modus operandi" of the Directorate of Security and Intelligence, having evolved over a period of fifteen or twenty years, were tried, tested and well established.

It seemed to me that my objectives could probably most usefully be achieved by concentrating first on:

- a) explaining to Ministers and senior officials as clearly as possible the problems, capabilities and the limitations of the Security Service,
- b) improving the machinery at various levels within the bureaucracy through which the Security Service reported to Ministers and senior officials,
- c) giving effect to the government's stated wish to establish a security service which would be "increasingly separate in structure and civilian in nature",

- d) clarifying and defining the role of the Security Service in the light of the Royal Commission Report and the government's reaction to it,
- e) improving and strengthening the liaison arrangements which the Security Service enjoyed with various foreign intelligence/security agencies.

While all these matters appeared urgent and had to be tackled simultaneously the need to clarify the Security Service's role and to make a beginning on "civilianization" of the Security Service clearly deserved priority. The latter objective seemed to demand that at the very least the Security Service should have control over three areas of activity; security operations, disposition of the financial resources allocated to it and the allocation and use of the manpower assigned to it. Control in these areas obviously was essential to the creation of a security service of the kind outlined by the Prime Minister in his speech to the House of Commons of June 26, 1969.

One of my first tasks upon taking over, however, was to make myself known to Security Service members across the country and to explain what it was that I thought the government intended. This literally meant travelling from one end of Canada to the other. It proved to be far more time-consuming and demanding than I had imagined and especially as at the same time I was required to travel outside the country a good deal.

There proved to be tremendous variations in the way in which Security Service business was perceived and conducted in different parts of the country. In the bigger centers, such as Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver, there were well-established Security Service components; large enough to enjoy an identity quite distinct from other elements of the RCMP. In these cities, while the Security Service component was under the general direction of the RCMP Officer commanding the division, in some matters they appeared to be almost autonomous.

At the very best this meant a split direction of their activities and at the worst it meant that Security Service headquarters had little or no control over them. In smaller centers, such as Halifax, where security matters were in the hands of a Staff Sergeant, who in hierarchical terms enjoyed little status, the situation was far worse. In fact, the head of the Security Service enjoyed far less control over Security Service operations, finances and personnel than did many divisional commanders across the country.

While my advent met with varied reactions on the part of divisional commanders and their staffs, I was refreshed and encouraged by the almost universally favourable reactions among Security Service members - and especially among the younger members - who appeared to welcome the changes heralded by the government's decision to give the Security Service a separate identity and a more civilian nature. I found that the more intelligent and progressive younger officers and men, and even the seasoned NCOs, were far ahead of the government in their desire for reform and a new deal. Indeed, without that enthusiasm and support I think I should have given up the task much sooner than I did.

I had been aware, of course, that a good deal of tension had developed between the RCMP and Ministers and senior officials during the period when the government was working out its position on the recommendations and findings of the Royal Commission. The RCMP were doggedly opposed to a separation of the Security Service from the RCMP without perhaps being able to present their case with much eloquence or finesse and the government was irritated and frustrated by their stubborn attitude.

I was shocked, however, shortly after taking over the job by an incident which demonstrated the extent of the distrust of the RCMP on the part of Ministers and their apparent ignorance of security operations.

In March 1970 I was approached by an Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet to ask if I could ascertain if the RCMP had "bugged" the telephones of Ministers and senior officials and the Cabinet offices during the period when the Royal Commission Report was being debated by them behind closed doors. Evidently, the Prime Minister and others had felt that RCMP officers were uncommonly well prepared for the questions and propositions put to them by Ministers. They appeared to be so well briefed, indeed, that it was suspected they might have used their arcane skills to eavesdrop on the Prime Minister and his advisors. There also was some mention of the fact that during the discussions between Ministers and RCMP officials one RCMP officer was seen to have with him a portable tape recorder.

I expressed my surprise at the suggestion that the Directorate of Security and Intelligence would attempt to misuse its capabilities in such a manner. I undertook to make discreet enquiries and to report back. This I was able to do in due course. I reported that I had discovered

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absolutely nothing which would support such an allegation. Moreover, I had satisfied myself that it would have been virtually impossible technically for anything of that kind to have been undertaken and sustained.

To introduce microphones into the Cabinet offices clandestinely would entail a major operation involving numerous persons and substantial technical support.

I was unable to offer any comment about the possible use of a tape recorder by the RCMP during the discussions they had with Ministers. To have used a tape recorder might have been "infra dig" but it would not have been an unusual procedure in the conduct of government business and it certainly could not be compared with clandestine telephone interceptions or the use of electronic eavesdropping devices.

My explanation appeared to have satisfied my interlocutor since I heard no more about the matter. However, it left me with a profound uneasiness and an early appreciation of the apparent depth of distrust and the sheer ignorance of the technical capabilities of the Security Service on the part of Ministers and their senior advisors. The latter point is not without relevance to the task which has been given this Commission.

In the meantime, of course, while I was attempting to familiarize myself with the scope and nature of my new responsibilities events were taking place across the country and especially in Quebec which were to cause the Security Service to readjust its priorities and to increase its capabilities to assess and to deal with a number of new problems.

Various attempts were made to anticipate events and thus to be better prepared to cope with them. These efforts were undertaken in the hope that it might be possible to take preventative measures instead of always having to react to events after they occurred. These efforts were not always successful but some progress was made. I should like to table as an example of what was being attempted, a memorandum, dated July 23rd, 1970, sent to Mr. Maxwell, the Chairman of the Interdepartmental Committee on Law and Order. (Appendix C) The memorandum is, I believe, self-explanatory and the document attached to it, which is available on the Security Service's files, gives a reasonably clear picture of what was known about different radical groups and organizations across Canada at the time and how these various threats were perceived by the Security Service. The Commission might find the document has some intrinsic value. It also might serve to give something of the flavour of the internal situation in the early '70's, so important to an understanding of how various threats to internal security and national unity were then perceived and the pressures these created upon the Security Service to provide timely reports about their activities.

The greatest demands of course, related to the government's desire to be as fully informed as possible about separatist and terrorist activities in Quebec. These requirements were first formulated in the late 1960's and by 1970 they had become well articulated and urgent.

The notion of course, that Quebec Separatism as such was to be regarded as the single greatest threat to national security was not suddenly conceived by the RCMP Security Service in the way that Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom is fabled to have sprung fully armed from Jupiter's brow. The idea first took concrete shape upon the explicit direction of the Prime Minister of the day, Mr. L.B. Pearson.

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At the instance of Mr. Pearson a special Security Panel meeting was held on the 14th of August 1967 to consider the problems posed by Quebec Separatism and to devise ways of countering them. A second such meeting of the Security Panel took place on September 29, 1967. Accounts of these meetings are on the files of the Security Service. These indicate clearly the government's concern about Separatism as such and the role which the RCMP Directorate of Intelligence and Security was expected to play in dealing with the matter. Among other things, the files show that in its initial stages the discussion was carried out largely at the official level with only certain Ministers being informed by the Prime Minister. For example, at the September 29th meeting the RCMP was assured that the then Solicitor General, Mr. Pennell, was to be notified of the matter and of the R.C.M.P.'s involvement.

The files of the Security Service also reveal considerable uneasiness on the part of the RCMP concerning its involvement and about the ability of the Intelligence and Security Directorate to carry out the tasks which were to be assigned to it. This is especially evident from a study of minutes of a meeting called at RCMP Headquarters by the Deputy Commissioner (Operations) on August 24, 1967 which ends with a list of ten points which were perceived then as "dangers and difficulties". With hindsight those concerned seemed to have shown great prescience on this score.

There appears to be a gap in Security Service records dealing with this matter from the Fall of 1967 until late December 1969. No doubt, however, this gap can be filled by an examination of the records of the Privy Council Office which must contain a full and authoritative account of discussion of this subject at various levels during the period in question.

The files of the Security Service contain reasonably full notes of a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security and Intelligence under the Chairmanship of the present Prime Minister which took place on December 19, 1969, about ten days before I became Director General of the Security Service. That meeting was devoted to a very full discussion at the Cabinet level of the problems of Separatism and decisions about ways and means of dealing with them. My appointments book for this period shows that I attended this meeting.

~~As I recall~~ my attendance was suggested by George McIlraith. Since I was still a member of the Department of External Affairs at the time and obviously present only in the role of an observer, I took no notes but my recollection of the principal points discussed supports the various notes on the files of the Security Service and especially those made by the then Commissioner (Higgitt).

I assume the records of the Privy Council Office will contain a much more complete account of this and any related discussions and supporting papers. The files of the Security Service indicate the following were among the decisions reached:

- (a) Data was to be gathered about
  - (i) ways in which Separatist movements in Quebec were being funded; (by this time the Parti Quebecois had become established as the successor to the Mouvement Souveraineté Association)
  - (ii) the extent of Separatist influence in the Quebec government, public service, political parties, universities, unions, and the professions;
  - (iii) political, social, and economic unrest in Quebec.
- (b) The means by which sources of information in these areas was to be expended included
  - (i) technical operations;
  - (ii) development of human resources in Quebec;
  - (iii) expanded co-operation and assistance at various levels of Government to ensure a faster flow of information to Ottawa.