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Commission on Security

Chief Justice Earl Warren has recently joined the ranks of prominent critics of the nation's security system. Pointing out in the November 1955 issue of *Fortune* that more than 8 million persons in the United States are subject to security procedures he warned: "In the present struggle between our world and Communism the temptation to imitate totalitarian security methods is a subtle temptation that must be resisted day by day, for it will be with us as long as totalitarianism itself."

Shortly after the appearance of Warren's article, the Civil Service Commission announced that 2778 federal employees had been dismissed for security reasons between 1 October 1953 and 30 June 1955. Unlike earlier reports, the latest figure was accompanied by the further information that only 413 of the dismissed employees had had hearings and that an additional 347 employees had been cleared following formal hearings. Past reports have been difficult to interpret, and their vagueness has frequently seemed less intended to convey accurate information than to create the impression of great effectiveness in ferreting out large numbers of potentially dangerous employees. The more detailed figures of the recent report are valuable in indicating that in only a seventh of the cases listed as "dismissed for security reasons" did the evidence undergo the scrutiny it gets in a security hearing, and that in close to half of the cases in which hearings were held the employee was cleared of the charges brought against him.

The more and more widely held belief that the security system should have a thorough examination led to the adoption by the Congress last spring of a resolution creating a 12-member national commission on security, with four members each to be appointed by the President, the Vice President, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Not until 10 November were the appointments announced: James P. McGrannery, Attorney General in the Truman Administration; Franklin D. Murphy, chancellor of the University of Kansas; Louis S. Rothschild, Under-secretary of Commerce; Carter L. Burgess, Assistant Secretary of Defense; Senators John Stennis and Norris Cotton; Lloyd Wright, past president of the American Bar Association; Susan Riley, professor of education at George Peabody College; Representatives Francis E. Walter and William L. McCulloch; James L. Noel, Jr., a Houston (Texas) attorney; and Edwin L. Mechem, former governor of New Mexico.

The appointments were immediately criticized for not including anyone who had distinguished himself in the field of civil liberties and for including too many persons who have been or still are responsible for administering government security procedures. One of the critics, the *Washington Post and Times Herald*, added editorially that "disappointment over the composition of the new commission ought not to result in prejudgment of its work. . . . If the members come to the same conclusion that experts who have studied the program already have come to—that the excesses have been defeating the purposes—the findings will carry additional weight because of the makeup of the commission itself."—D.W.