

R130/17/12/5
CPI

Army knew of A.R.M.—but Security men were not told

12/12/64 RRM

By PETER HAZELHURST

THE Security Branch is investigating why information on the African Resistance Movement, which was in the hands of the Military Intelligence Department nearly two years ago, was not passed on to the police.

The exploits of a young Rhodesian, who was recruited as a special agent by Military Intelligence officers in February, 1963, were published in a Sunday newspaper this week.

The agent, Mr David Plotz, who stumbled across the identity of one of the A.R.M. leaders, Robert Watson, was sent back to South Africa from Paris in April, 1963, with an assignment to infiltrate into Watson's group in Cape Town.

On Sunday Brigadier H. J. van der Berg, chief of the Security Branch, said his organisation had received no information from Mr Plotz. The A.R.M. had been uncovered by his officers, said the Brigadier.

FLEW TO S.A.

The police first picked up members of the African Resistance Movement in July this year, shortly after the leaders of the organisation fled the country.

But almost 18 months before the first A.R.M. arrests, Mr Plotz had received information on Robert Watson, who escaped from South Africa this year. Mr Plotz was flown to Cape Town to find out more about Watson's clique.

Mr Plotz first got on to Watson's trail when, in Europe, he received a letter from one of Watson's girl friends. She informed Mr Plotz that Watson had wanted her to pass on to him coded letters which would arrive at her address in America, from all parts of the Republic and the Protectorates.

The African Resistance Movement—of which Robert Watson was named as a co-conspirator and leader in the recent sabotage trials—carried out acts of sabotage in 1963 and early 1964.

FIND OUT WHY

Mr Plotz left Cape Town after preliminary investigations in May 1963. None of his information, suspicions, or his report on Watson's actions were received by the Security police who only got on to the organisation in June this year.

Now the Security Branch is trying to find out why.

It has been established that Mr Plotz's story is correct. He was asked to make a statement to the police this week.

It is believed that if the police had been given the information much of the recent sabotage in the A.R.M. could have been prevented.