

The task of applying to the Department's operational records the retention and disposal schedule approved by the Dominion Archivist progressed reasonably well during the year. The transfer of old departmental records from the Public Archives Records Centre to the Historical Branch, Public Archives of Canada, in accordance with the Government's 30-year policy on access to public records, continued in 1971.

A study to computerize the Department's records indices for pre-1963 records to provide rapid and accurate retrieval of relevant files through their subject titles, which was undertaken in 1970 in co-operation with the Management Services Division, the Computer Service Bureau and the Public Archives of Canada was completed in 1971 and is now being used as a retrieval aid.

Telecommunications Division

The Telecommunications Division is responsible for the operational and technical activities of the Canadian Diplomatic Communications System, which provides for the despatch and receipt of messages by telegraph, diplomatic courier and diplomatic mail facilities between Ottawa and posts in other countries. It also arranges for the provision of telephone services at posts; conducts training courses for communicators, technicians and other departmental personnel; and is responsible for purchasing, leasing, installing and maintaining all communications equipment and services used throughout the System. Liaison with other departments and agencies that employ these facilities is a further responsibility of this Division.

Library Services

The Library Services unit provides both reader and technical services at home and abroad for members of the Department. Periodicals, newspapers, books, government documents and foreign-language training records (including instruction guides) are bought or borrowed and distributed both on selection by the professional Library staff and on request by members of the Department. Topics in international affairs and related fields are covered by a comprehensive reference collection and an efficient reference service. The latter is supported by the Press Clipping Service with articles and other materials from the daily press. The Library maintains active liaison with other departmental libraries and alternate sources of information on international affairs and makes considerable use of interlibrary loans.

An important development during 1971 was the setting-up of a Documents Centre where materials of this sort are collected, filed and inventoried.

Small libraries were established in the newly-opened chanceries in Algiers and Peking. In April, Library Services undertook to assist in the establishment of a more ambitious library in Mexico City, a task that involved the training of staff for this specific purpose, the purchase of books, serials and other sources of information, and co-operation in the designing of the furnishings for the new library.