go unchecked, there being few corrective actions applied by the users, and as usage drops off relatively, the Registry files could become almost meaningless to the substantive operations of the Department, existing largely as a jumbled warehouse of archival material.

Summary of General Findings

55.   During the many interviews and discussions held on the subject of information storage and retrieval four principal needs were expressed by a large cross-section of the participants which can be summarized as follows:

a) fast response to retrieval requests: heavy operational biases, the need to offer guidance and suggestions to the posts, general work habits and a much improved communications system all conspire to reduce the time span acceptable to participants in the foreign affairs process.

b) much more skilful and flexible employment of the Records Classification Guide: To compete with the users' own working files, the Departmental files must more closely parallel the operational demands of the Department.

c) better access to key material: to ensure a sufficient depth of background is brought to bear on a situation, to facilitate the maintenance of a comprehensive overview at senior management levels, to provide a basis for policy analysis at the macro level.

d) coordination support: up-to-date structure of information to provide better means to identify events, activities or policies of relevance both inside and outside the Department.

The "Satellite" Systems

56.   Paragraph 21 identified Category B as a group of "users" whose programmes included activities largely of an operational nature which seemed to give rise to rather specialized requirements. It would be premature to decide whether these requirements would best be dealt with by traditional methods or by applying automation, or by some combination of the two approaches. The various activities will have to be examined in more detail in Phase II but it would seem desirable to cite them briefly now on the basis that at first sight there would appear to be possibilities to make gains in the quality or productivity of present operations by the application of more advanced techniques. The following listing is not exhaustive but will serve to record by unit or Division a number of perceived requirements revealed in the course of the Departmental survey:

a) Consular Bureau

(i)   With the assistance of the O and M Section of the Management Services Division the Bureau has determined that there is a pressing need to create a consolidated name index of Canadians requiring consular assistance abroad or otherwise becoming the subject of concern to the Bureau.

(ii) There is also interest in the Bureau in developing