

Library

An automated information-retrieval program was successfully introduced during 1977 in the Library Services Division. The daily extraction of statistical and bibliographical information from some 80 data-bases was introduced.

Thus periodicals, documents and monographs collected over the years can now be fully used as a result of speedy machine-access.

Research to meet the requirements of the Department at home and abroad has undergone substantial expansion as a result of these new capabilities.

The Library staff have themselves adapted well to the rapid developments in the use of microforms and automated systems. For example, departmental membership in a cataloguing consortium promised an increasingly challenging future role for the division. In addition to giving better service to clients, the increasing conversion of material to micrographics has produced immediate and practical benefits through economy of storage space and ease of filing. These developments at departmental headquarters have been matched by improvement of the extensive services provided to posts, and have demonstrated that the Library has a vital function to perform throughout the Department.

Word-processing

With a view to achieving economies in some of the Department's typing operations, a Word-Processing Services Section was established at headquarters early in 1977. From a small pilot project, the section increased in size in proportion to the additional volume and complexity of work as various divisions turned increasingly to it for specialized assistance.

The technical aspect of word-processing involves the use of equipment ranging from simple magnetic-card and tape typewriters to sophisticated micro-computers equipped with screens and programmable diskettes.

Depending on the media used, documents varying in size from one to 100 pages can be stored on cards, tapes or diskettes for long or short periods, according to specific requirements, and can be reproduced at will for reference or revision.

Word-processing is a central service, available to all units of the Department. It has been found to be of greatest value in such applications as the editing and production of lengthy reports, multiple letters, letters with variable inserts and the "reformatting" of the many texts produced in the two official languages.