documents dealt with tend to differ from External Affairs material in that they do not form part of daily increasing files of telegrams and letters, being more like the kind of documents going to the Minister or Cabinet. Being less ephemeral in nature, somewhat more elaborate indexing procedures are appropriate than time would permit in handling a daily flow of communications. What was interesting to find, however, was a corps of quasi-professional Bureau Data Officers, generally university graduates, working through on-line CRT terminals and closely integrated in the Bureaux to which they were attached. Retrievals through the index produces titles and brief abstracts and the addresses of microfiche holding the complete texts of the items desired. Correspondence files, however, are not covered by the ECDOC system which is still in an early stage of operation and facing problems of acceptance and cooperation by some apparently very autonomy-minded Directors-General of Bureaux.

156.   The Australians are embarked upon a major project, the heart of which appears to be a large message switch. The scale of the project is necessarily large because the Communication system apparently must meet the internal requirements of the federal government as well as provide the external services. A reading of the 1972 report on the subject suggests that internal impediments are recognized as creating most of the delays in service. The remedies envisaged are communications-oriented, and envisage also the use of considerable computer capacity. From this distance it is a little difficult to say whether the Australian experience could be of much help in the particular circumstances in this Department because the report does not deal very much with the records management aspects. For example, the view is taken that if information is properly distributed, its placement by recipients on appropriate files should follow. Filing would apparently be carried out by the Bureaux in their own sub-registries. These aspects, discussed only briefly in the report, will no doubt be dwelt upon in more detail as the project develops. Among other things, a completely new file subject classification is to be established.

157.   If material is badly indexed and described, there is less chance of a searcher being fortunate enough to stumble across it in a computer retrieval system than in "hard copy" files. Thus all system developers recognize that high standards of performance and competence are required of indexers/analysts.

158.   The State Department rotates indexers between input and retrieval functions, so that retrieval experience can be used to improve indexing decisions. However, the analyst is removed from the user, contact being by telephone, which tends to impersonalize the service rendered. The majority of the indexers are college graduates. Experienced indexers are classified as GS 9 and 11.

159.   The EEC have overcome this problem by making the indexer/analyst/ retriever part of the directorate which he serves to the extent that if the material is predominantly about agriculture, an agricultural degree is preferred. In this way the system is expected to gain the acceptance of the user and a close relationship and understanding will be developed between the user and the indexer/analyst.

160.   The British Foreign Office, though still maintaining a manual system, recognize the importance of indexing and, to ensure reasonable quality of performance, assign those entering at the bottom of the Foreign Service Officer stream to correspondence classification and indexing tasks.

161.   The Australians plan to create new personnel classification described as the "Information Handling Group" which would combine and upgrade the Communications Analysts and the Registry Classifiers. They regard this new