

the "basket" file containing many irrelevant items.

- d) sub-files: a fairly common phenomenon known to professional indexers is "subject drift" which arises in general material not amenable to "case" or "project" filing. A good analyst will recognize this fact and create a new sub-file devoted to the new topic. Too often the change passes unnoticed, with the "basket" file result. More commonly the analyst fails to see clearly the various subsidiary subjects under a general heading, or is lazy, and allows the massive "basket" file to develop. Allied to this is the question of the sensitivity of the filing system to the user's needs. General lack of liaison and understanding between the registry analyst and the user results in delays or refusals to create sub-files as requested, in some cases with justification. However, this lack of flexibility turns the user back to his own files which can be arranged to suit the immediate situation as he sees it and tend to be very project-oriented. While it would be wrong for the Registry to attempt to match this very short-range flexibility, too rigid a structure does not serve the users well.

52. An attempt at corrective action in the recent past in the area of subject classification has been the institution of a key word index serving a twofold purpose, namely, to provide a method of assisting the user to gain access to specific items, and to provide the Registry analyst with a similar facility to assist in relating new material to relevant previously filed items. It was anticipated that the procedure, which generates more than 250,000 index sheets per year, would be a preparatory step to computer indexing. However, the quality of selection of key words and other aspects of the situation are such that grave doubts are cast upon the validity of the exercise, in spite of the some one-hundred requests per day addressed to the index, mostly by the analysts.

53. The fundamental weaknesses with respect to the classification of material are compounded by a number of other shortcomings which are usually the first problems to become apparent to the potential user. Among these are:

- * slow response to retrieval requests
- * apparent two-week delay before material is 'put away' into files
- * material not yet 'put away' is frequently omitted when files sent to users
- * Registry is usually unable to respond on the same day to requests made after 3:30 p.m.

54. It has been shown how rotation affects the quality of staff performing analysis of material in the Registry. The other critical problem it creates is a lack of continuity both in historical knowledge of material and understanding of the needs of individual users, who themselves change on a rotational basis. Given all the various problems the low average figure of forty-five substantive file retrievals per day (exclusive of Consular and "housekeeping") is not at all surprising. It seems almost inevitable that as the deficiencies mentioned above