

Affairs has occasion to call for old records from Tunney's Pasture relatively more frequently than do most Departments. Only CMHC, DSS and DVA with searches for "case" and financial records match the External Affairs rate. The National Archives must also concur in any records microfilming programme introduced in the Department.

Item (e) recognizes that whatever system may be developed it must be such as to accommodate to continuing changes in Departmental needs as the Department itself adapts to changing world conditions. Adoption of a new system, but one giving only limited scope for response to change, could only lead to a second, probably painful, readjustment if it should later be found to have outlived its usefulness. Similarly, deliberate care must be taken to avoid being locked in on a technological "dead-end" when reasonable planning could take into account possible evolution in the state of the art.

64. Five criteria, while undoubtedly of significance to all systems, are identified as appearing to be of greater importance to External Affairs than to other departments:

Item (f) is a reflection of Government policy, as announced by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on May 1, 1969, to permit access to Departmental files covering the so-called "closed period" (i.e. records less than thirty years old) by legitimate academic researchers. As indicated with respect to archival requirements there is a relatively high level of interest in External Affairs material. Because the files inevitably contain some sensitive documents regarding living persons or relating to foreign governments, some degree of control over access is essential. If the technical structure of the information system should be such as to call for random or indiscriminate searches through the whole body of material including current documents, outsiders could not themselves be given direct access. The servicing of legitimate enquiries could thus impose an undue burden on the personnel and other resources of the Historical Research Division.

Item (g) will be of particular relevance if computer indexing and retrieval procedures should be introduced. "Need for access" rules would obviously have to be adopted and the question of physical security also arises in that a computer will require shielding to prevent outside detection of electro-magnetic emanations. Rules and procedures regarding EDP installations have been established under the Interdepartmental Security Advisory Committee.

Item (h) recognizes that the complex nature of the operational files of the Department places unusual demands on the records management personnel and on the system itself. Most subjects involve several inter-relationships, thus differing in this respect from the much more common "case", "name", "project" or "place" files which can be coped with reasonably well in many other departments.