

ensure that appropriate user liaison and assistance is provided to them in order that proposals submitted are realistic in terms of the resources required, what the systems can be expected to accomplish, the benefits that should result and the savings that might be generated (dollars and/or PYs). The various steps involved in the acquisition process have already been described in a Departmental circular approved by the Committee, and the Committee should monitor compliance.

The Committee may find it useful to adopt an annual work program for the fiscal year that is synchronized with the Government's Expenditure Management Cycle. For example, at a meeting in April the Committee could approve the detailed work plan for the Department's Informatics organization; in June it could discuss Departmental priorities, the resource situation and what effect they might have for the Department's Informatics development; in August the Committee could consider a call letter drafted on the basis of the June meeting requesting Branches to submit new project proposals for the next Fiscal Year plus one; in October it could review progress of projects; in December the Committee would examine the Department's Long-Term Plan giving directions for its modification and selecting the projects to be included in the Departmental resource submissions; and finally in February the Committee could approve the Long-Term Plan, the annual submission to Treasury Board (ITSP) and the systems content of Branch resource submissions.

The preceding paragraphs have concentrated on the role of the EDP Policy Committee. Organizations using individual systems should be responsible for initiating systems projects, for cooperating in the design of the appropriate systems and, subsequently for operating the systems. Only in this way can users be sure that their needs will be met.

4.2.7 INFORMATICS ISSUES

Although the Department has been a latecomer to the introduction of EDP systems, this may in some respects be an advantage since many of the costly mistakes made elsewhere through too rapid introduction of new systems have been avoided. There are also disadvantages. The modest efforts to date have resulted in the development within the Department of a group of people experienced in the design and operation of systems to meet the Department's special needs. However, the creation of a major new applications system can take several months of work by professional personnel. (The Paris system took eight months of elapsed time after receipt of final project approval involving one staff member full time and some times additional staff members). There can be no shortcuts. Moreover with the inauguration of a new system, there are also frequent, and continuing requirements for assistance from professional personnel for tasks relating to maintenance and enhancement. The 1983 report of the Auditor-General commented on this problem by pointing out that in the government, since P/Y allocations for EDP development organizations tend to be frozen, capacity to develop new systems diminishes with every computer application put into service. "If no relief comes, the moment cannot be far away that systems development must also cease".

Because of lack of personnel resources the two Divisions that are mainly involved in the Informatics area - Management Services Division and Telecommunications Division - have difficulty in coping with their existing workloads. The successful introduction and operation of Informatics Systems by the Department will be dependent on sufficient resources being made available for development and support activities. (For each EDP system these activities are initiated with the planning and requirements analysis and include, general and detailed system design, installation and testing, operation, maintenance of application and systems software, technical support and technical security inspections).

The Department faces a difficult task because of the need to protect classified information and thus to use secure systems which are costly and complex to operate. In future Departmental dependence on secure systems will grow, with