

principle only those with a "need for access" would be given the necessary coded keys for operation of the computer terminals. While authorized personnel would be able to gain rapid access to a large body of information it is also true that the computer imposes certain impediments to the unauthorized or accidental disclosure of information.

Bilingualism

177. The Department has reached the stage in the implementation of the Government's official language policy where all communications may be drafted in either English or French strictly according to the choice of the originator. This means that the indexing and retrieval procedures will have to accommodate to both languages. Certain practical considerations arise in that between eighty and ninety per cent of Departmental communications are in English. In these circumstances it is not yet clear what technical approach to use of the computer out of several possibilities would yield the best results. This problem will have to be examined carefully in Phase II in conjunction with consideration of the best way to develop a suitable thesaurus.

178. In another direction, the reorganization and recruitment programme so essential to the introduction of the "Preferred System" will have to take account of the way in which the personnel policies of the Department are fulfilling the requirements with respect to bilingualism.

Involvement of Posts

179. The "Preferred System" has been designed specifically to deal with the requirements of the Departmental headquarters. However, a thorough systems approach to the problem has resulted in the identification of several aspects of post operations as being relevant to the larger picture:

a) The Form of Communications from Posts

180. From time to time efforts have been made to restrict the length and number of telegrams with the objective of reducing costs, or of reducing the load on the system to accommodate the handling of crises of various kinds or of union "go slow" tactics. The current study has not been addressed to diminishing these burdens and is based on the assumption that whatever happens, telegrams will continue to increase in number, both in absolute terms and as a proportion of Departmental communications. The installation of message switches in Ottawa and London, and the introduction of ~~NEW~~ cypher equipment, will only accelerate the process, whether or not the Department must inevitably obey a sort of Parkinsonian law to the effect that telegram traffic will always rise inexorably to absorb all available capacity.

181. Some automated storage and retrieval systems require the analysts to write abstracts or summaries of the documents to be stored. This approach is particularly applicable to scientific papers. It does not lend itself easily to handling a flow of daily communications and was rejected after being tested in an experiment conducted in the Swiss Foreign Office. Nevertheless, the POPSUM operation and other higher-level needs in the Department, as discussed in Chapter V, are of sufficient importance to justify examining whether changes in the form and content of telegrams could yield worthwhile benefits.