Q. In light of the corporate review, do you anticipate reductions in SIGNET services?

R.K. As you know, the government is committed to deficit reduction. When the budget is released in February, all government departments will have their budgets reduced. Communication is fundamental. Because one of the Department's priorities is to meet the growing demand for application development, we estimate that while the Bureau will have to give up positions and dollars, this should not significantly affect its ability to deliver core SIGNET services.

If, however, the Bureau's budget continues to decrease, our ability to service problems quickly will be affected, as will our ability to upgrade equipment and software on the present three to four-year basis.

Q. Is ICONDESK really going to be simpler and more enjoyable to use with each iteration? How much room do you have to take into account client requirements with respect to ICONDESK?

R.K. I think it's clear that the original ICONDESK product did not completely satisfy Departmental or individual requirements. It simply wasn't as friendly and efficient as any of us would have liked. And we are still encountering a significant degree of frustration with ICONDESK. The good news is, however, that ICONDESK 4.4 is being deployed this month. I've used it for a while and I like it very much. It's solved a lot of my personal annoyances with SIGNET. When all users have it, I believe the frustration level with the product will be reduced significantly. And, as

full fax capability to the keyboard, will soon be operational, I hope client satisfaction with the tool will increase even further.

> ## As we all want an easy-to-use, friendly and efficient tool, we welcome recommendations for improvements to ICONDESK

While ICONDESK is a commercial, off-the-shelf product, we recognize the need to refine it. As we all want an easy-to-use, friendly and efficient tool, we welcome recommendations for improvements to ICONDESK, as does Olivetti, its developer. In fact, it's from listening to client complaints and addressing those that are reasonable, that the product has been improved. We also must consider the future direction of ICONDESK. To do that effectively, we need good input from clients.

Q. The Information Systems Bureau (STD) is under re-organization. What impact will this have on the SIGNET client?

R.K. The re-organization of the Bureau reflects two important, linked changes: first, the shift in focus from building an information technologies infrastructure (SIGNET) to delivering the applications that will take advantage of that infrastructure; and second, an increased emphasis on client training and service.

In addition to providing more training, STC will also serve as the focal point for client queries

about SIGNET. And, as the Bureau is working more directly with SNUG to ensure that the evolution of SIGNET meets client needs, expectations and requirements, some of STC's resources are linked to the Bureau's contribution to the staffing and the functioning of SNUG.

We have also established a new group (STED) for the development and implementation of applications. This is not, however, to be confused with assuming the development of functional applications. Trade will continue to own WIN; Immigration will continue to own CAIPS; and Consular Affairs, COSMOS. What STED offers is a service analogous to CFSI's; that is, it provides its clients with technical expertise in the development of an application specific to their needs. In some cases, STED will assume the actual development of applications and their management.

Q. The missions often see themselves as forgotten players in the development of SIGNET. As you have worked at a mission and have recently returned from a visit to missions, have you new ideas to incorporate into the activities of the Bureau to ensure the needs and concerns of the posts are fully considered?

R.K. As the Bureau's focus has been on design and implementation of SIGNET, there has been a tendency to focus more on Headquarters' requirements rather than on missions needs. We must not forget, however, that the missions deliver our product and that it is essential to give them the tools and the information to do that effectively. Until now, we disseminated information on SIGNET largely through the Panorama.