

- l) To serve the varied operational requirements arising from the posts abroad.
- m) To support the Department's coordination role by maintaining up-to-date data bases to ensure the timely flow of relevant information to other Government departments.
- n) To support particular Departmental operational functions through quickly accessible data bases.
- o) To provide for the timely presentation of key information
  - : in general support of the foreign policy formulation role;
  - : as a tool for senior management to ensure proper correlation in the policy formulation process.

62. The statement of course contains the obvious criteria which would be expected to apply to any records management system. It will be seen to reflect also a concern about the various shortcomings revealed by the Departmental survey. Thus, under the "General" heading, items (b) and (c) reflect a concern for poor registry performance in addition to being of the general character shared with the other items within the same category.

63. Some additional comments may be useful:

Item (a) may seem so obvious as not to require stating, but if it is appreciated that the Department has some 30,000 files in the Lester B. Pearson Building, and about another 100,000 in the Public Archives at Tunney's Pasture occupying expensive storage space, the significance of the word "economic" becomes apparent. There is also the problem that some important original documents of historical value have been irretrievably lost. Treasury Board must, of course, give specific approval of any new programme involving the significant use of electronic data processing.

Item (b) is partially the product of complaints about slow deliveries from the Registry. At the same time it is meant to ensure that any innovations introduced to the system, such as computer indexing or microfilming, do not impede the rapid movement of material from the Communications Centre or Mail Room to addressees.

Item (c) is addressed to current weaknesses in the classifying and indexing processes but is also a warning that expenditure for automation will only be justified if accuracy and speed of retrieval is improved without swamping the user with a mass of unwanted and superfluous documents.

Item (d) reflects the fact that there seems to be greater archival interest in documents on Canada's external relations than in the history of the operational programmes of many other Departments. Moreover, at a rate of five-hundred retrievals per month External