

been of interest to the Department in the past. Similarly, a look at the list of subjects covered (in terms of meetings and delegations) by a multilateral mission such as Geneva during even a few months is also instructive in this regard.

Building a data base of this nature is, of necessity, a long term project. This fact in itself makes it difficult to identify a very limited range of subjects that will necessarily be of priority interest in even a few years, let alone a decade in the future. A broader "net" has a better potential for including a span of coverage of issues or subjects of future interest. Several officers said that they felt that the system might be of particular use in providing information on new issues, the existence of which might be difficult to forecast in advance. These considerations make the development of specific subject parameters difficult.

In addition, as can be seen from the "narrow" list of subjects above, some definition of just what is included under the rubric "the foreign policy and external relations of Canada" is clearly required. Failure to develop this clear definition would result in the development of a system that is basically without limits.

(2) Chronological span: ideally, the greater the span of coverage for inclusion of material in the data base the greater the potential value of the file. In the retrieval process it is a simple task to select items only from the time period you wish to cover thus making it