

capability of rapidly scanning the day's telegrams by CRT through the subsidiary system would give the editor of POPSUM a very flexible tool. Moreover, the acceptance of a certain amount of discipline by originators in the writing of lead paragraphs would enable the use of "Computer Output Microfilm" (known as COM) or a computer impact printer to produce an almost ready-made POPSUM text according to selections made by the editor, and direct Xerox reproduction would probably be feasible without the delay of an intermediate typing step.

Key Policy Documents

113. The day-to-day work of the Department produces a wide variety of material. A great deal of it is necessarily of an ephemeral or transient nature but out of the general flow policy issues arise. These call for Ministerial or Cabinet decisions requiring the writing of situation reports and memoranda embodying recommendations. It is these documents, which represent the syntheses and analysis of a large volume of material, that are of most lasting value. All too frequently in the handling of very active subjects (Indo-China, Cyprus, the Arab-Israeli conflict) multi-volume files are rapidly built up which tend to bury the critical documents within a mass of paper. The situation is not helped by numerous gross filing malpractices. Many years have gone by while the need to do something about these shortcomings has been building up. It is therefore proposed that over a period, say six months, the various Bureaux, with the assistance of their Bureau Information Control Offices, should develop sets of key documents on the main past and present policy issues to be found within their jurisdiction. These would be carefully indexed in the computer and produced as separate microfiche for each set for rapid retrieval. Being of relatively much higher value than "raw" data, such as telegrams and letters, these microfiche sets would be up-dated with each new increment of significant material. Xerox copies could be made from the microfiche on request.

Conferences and Canadian Delegations

114. The Central Staff and the Operations Centre have recently been given coordination and control functions in connection with international conferences held in Canada. This will involve storing and utilizing a fair amount of data, a process which might well be appropriate to the application of computer techniques. Similarly, computer capabilities could be employed in meeting the responsibility to be assigned to the Central Staff with respect to the administration of a revised Cabinet Directive No. 41, prescribing the coordinating role of External Affairs with respect to Canadian participation in international conferences abroad.

Comments

115. The foregoing has been presented to demonstrate the potential strength of the system and to outline some of the opportunities which could be opened up by the application of modern techniques. The state of the art is still moving rapidly in this field but even within well-tested technology a wide array of possible applications is available. There appears to be consensus in the Department that there is a dearth of accessible "structured" information, that is, what has been suggested in Figure 3 as pertaining to or leading to Level IV activity. To an appreciable extent it would not prove feasible to obtain satisfactory results from Level IV activity (conceived of as embracing