

CHAPTER VIII

PHASE II AND THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

General Considerations

200. The main tasks in Phase II will be to provide an implementation plan and to work out the detailed specifications required to make it effective.

201. It will be a complex managerial task to implement a system which will directly alter the jobs of some one-hundred and forty people, affect hundreds of other employees in the Department and take over two years to become fully operational. The process will also involve the introduction of advanced techniques and technologies and the need to obtain external approvals from Treasury Board and others. It would be premature to attempt to provide much detail but a tentative plan has been depicted in a somewhat sparse manner in Figure 7 as the basis for the work to be done in Phase II.

202. Figure 7 implies that a coherent orderly approach will be taken from the initiation of action until a stable system is in full operation. Attempts to make selective improvements rather than a complete and radical change should be avoided. The systems approach recommended in this report links each component to the whole, and it is only within the whole that the full benefits can be derived from any one element. This means that from now on no substantial changes should be made in the Records Management Division without considering their effect on the implementation plan for the "Preferred System".

The Implementation Plan

203. It would be unrealistic to expect that an immediate start on the development of the system could result in a completely operational system in anything less than two years. Even with ideal conditions of short delivery times, early staffing successes and immediate resource and budget availability this period could not be reduced below eighteen months. The time for the interaction of the various elements, particularly the partially non-controllable aspects such as delivery and outside approvals, suggests the two-year span as being the much more reasonable target. The critical items which together govern this time-scale are the computer system "hardware" and "software" definition and set-up activities, and the staffing and training processes.

The Computer System

204. Those activities related to the computer system and "software" should follow technical procedures which are now well established. Phase II should incorporate the necessary steps in the preparation of general specifications for the system (defining procedures, flows, manpower needs and so on) and more detailed specifications for the more technical components, followed by Treasury Board approvals and the invitations to tender. A three to six-month period could then elapse. Selection of any system proposal submitted would not rest on price alone, but would take into account other factors such as flexibility to handle future growth and capacity to handle loads with little or no degradation of performance. Proposed systems to meet Departmental requirements might vary widely as between suppliers and render the evaluation process difficult. Because of the size of the system in terms of numbers of terminals and volume of files, testing the suppliers' claims for performance ('bench-marking')