

The Division's activities include the opening of incoming official mail; the distributing of official mail, correspondence and documents; the analyzing, classifying and indexing of correspondence in such a way as to facilitate ready reference and subsequent retrieval of information; the conducting of training courses in records management; the scheduling of records for retention or destruction; and the providing of a departmental messenger service.

The effectiveness of the Records Classification System introduced in 1963, which was designed to ensure a uniform classification system at headquarters and at posts, has been sustained.

A central control over the work of the Division's various units is maintained by the requirement that periodic operational, statistical and staff-performance reports be submitted to head office. These reports permit assessment of the work volume of the units and the allocation of personnel to the best advantage. An annual report on the disposal of obsolete is also required from posts.

A number of members of the Division attended records-management or supervisory training courses in 1970. These courses were held under the sponsorship of the Public Service Commission and the Public Archives.

During 1970, training courses and orientation lectures on records management were given to 75 members of the Department. Personnel assigned to the Division or posted abroad attended courses that varied in character and duration to meet the needs of the trainees, depending on their qualifications, past experience and future duties. Familiarization briefings on the intra-departmental symbols system were given to members of the Department returning from posting.

The Division also provided assistance and guidance to various posts regarding the records system and techniques of records management, briefed officers, clerks and communicators proceeding to posts on the disposal of obsolete records, and gave counsel regarding the selection of records personnel for certain posts.

The task of applying to the Department's operational records the retention and disposal schedule approved by the Dominion Archivist proceeded well in 1970. The marking of retention periods on files is nearing completion. A second schedule applying to a portion of the Department's housekeeping records was prepared during the year, and submitted to and approved by the Dominion Archivist. A considerable quantity of old departmental records were transferred from the Public Archives Records Centre to the Historical Branch, Public Archives of Canada, for selective retention and permanent custody in accordance with the Department's schedule for operational records and with the Government's 30-year policy on access to public records.

In view of the time-consuming and ever-increasing number of requests for research received by the Division, the Records Management Division is co-operating with the Information Systems Division, the Computer Service Bureau and the Archives in a study to computerize the Department's records indices to provide rapid and accurate retrieval of relevant files through their subject titles.