

CHAPTER VII

CONSIDERATIONS IN IMPLEMENTATION
OF PREFERRED SYSTEM

163. Once a decision is taken to proceed with detailed planning and the drawing up of specifications certain factors will have to receive critical consideration. Several of these, such as the institution of a new format for drafting telegrams, could have extensive effects outside the information system itself. The following comments can only be indicative rather than definitive because they touch upon matters to be dealt with fully in Phase II.

Financial

164. The initial cost of a new system is likely to be substantial but the return in improved support to Departmental programmes would be significant in comparison with that attainable under the present arrangements. It would be a serious mistake, and perhaps virtually throwing away resources, to try to carry out the new programme on the cheap. It is too early to attempt a credible detailed cost estimate but because of the timing of the financial cycle it was necessary to present a "B" Budget forecast for Fiscal Year 1976/77 before a start had been made on Phase II and even before completion of this report. This is attached as Annex VIII. It shows a projected cost of \$408,000 in FY 1976/77 made up of capital costs of \$172,000 and personnel and operating expenses of \$236,000, including \$60,000 for rental of a "mini" computer for development purposes. Some \$90,000 additional costs would have to be incurred in the current fiscal year, largely for a microfiche camera and associated equipment in order to start the conversion of some files to microfiche in good time. This would leave to FY 1977/78 the major capital cost of a computer.

165. It must be mentioned that the Treasury Board exercises a responsibility to give approval in principle in advance of any significant electronic data processing (EDP) programmes being embarked upon by Departments. The Treasury Board staff have been made aware of the project through the Department's Annual EDP report submitted in November, 1974, and subsequent informal discussions. This consultative process will have to be carried further in Phase II.

166. At the outset of the project it was not anticipated that Phase I would produce detailed cost estimates because these would, to some degree, be determined by the nature of the implementation plan. The "B" Budget exercise has now focused more attention on the issue of wherewithal. During Phase II a critical path analysis will be drawn up which will help determine more accurately when various major disbursements would have to be made, such as for the early construction of a shielded room and secure links to the CRT's.

Personnel and Organization

167. A decision to initiate a programme based on the "Preferred System" would carry with it a number of implications regarding personnel. It is readily apparent that proposed features of the "Preferred System", encompassing both new functions and upgraded skills, would necessitate a major reorganization of the present Records Management Branch. The approach recognizes two basically different functional aspects:

*concern with the physical handling of material

*concern with the content of material.