Posts. There can be customization of some of the applications (e.g. lists of Canadians, lists of local contacts, lists of importers, mailing lists). There would be other core systems which have been developed by Headquarters to meet Departmental obligations to Parliament and/or the central agencies (e.g. the Financial system) which Posts would not be able to alter but which they could use as the basis for a management information system at the Post.

The question of training has been touched on in the "Systems Strategy". It is particularly important that as the Department introduces new systems for use by Posts a comprehensive training program be introduced for personnel being posted. The program should deal not only with the operation of equipment but also with its management in order that it can be used to best advantage.

To the extent feasible given that conditions relating to the supply, operation and maintenance of Informatics equipment vary around the world, the Department should aim to have installed at Posts equipment and software from the same family. To date this approach has been adopted and it has made the development task simpler as personnel have not had to develop applications for different kinds of equipment. This approach will offer even greater benefits in the future in terms of development, maintenance, support and training as the Department introduces new systems to a larger number of Posts.

4.5.5 LONG RANGE PLAN FOR POSTS

For purposes of this planning document Posts have been divided into three categories: "FMO" Posts, Immigration Posts, and medium and small Posts. Questions relating to the deployment of several new systems at Posts are already under active consideration within appropriate Bureaux of the Department.

The arguments that led the Department to initiate the program to introduce new systems in Paris and Bonn also apply in the case of the other "FMO" Posts. The Department should therefore continue to install equipment at Posts that handle a large volume of financial transactions and/or are located in a country where there is more than one Canadian Post.

The reasons for introducing new systems at those Posts that handle a large volume of Immigration cases have been mentioned earlier. The study for this project showed that there would be considerable cost savings from the proposed new system, not only for Hong Kong, but also for a large number of other Posts. The equipment for Hong Kong will be installed in 1985 and an evaluation is scheduled to be carried out in the summer of 1986. If the results of that evaluation are favourable then it is expected that the Department, in consultation with CEIC, will wish to move ahead with installing similar equipment at other Posts. The study which led to the Hong Kong project identified the following Posts as the ones which would yield the greatest amount of savings: New Delhi, New York, Kingston, Bangkok, Singapore, Manila, Rome, Port au Prince, Mexico City, and Warsaw. London, Paris and Bonn should also be included but they are already equipped or will be equipped with a computer. Preliminary planning is for four Posts to be provided with new systems in FY 1987/88, and another four in each of the following two fiscal years.

No plans have been made yet for the third category of Posts mentioned above. In the second chapter of this planning document it was recommended that as a matter of policy the Department should adopt a prototype approach to projects. In the case of medium and small Posts this approach would have considerable merit. Although the cost of the equipment that may eventually be acquired may not be very large, there are, as pointed out earlier in this document, a number of related costs that could be substantial. Moreover the acquisition by a Post of a new system will automatically bring with it a host of issues such as: maintenance, support, training, operations, and linkage to the Department's telecommunications network that will need careful examination and the establishment of policy guidelines. A major consideration is the development of the system itself which will require significant time and resources in Headquarters even though the equipment costs involved may be small.