

foreseen how difficult this task would become as we came to the end of the stocks of duplicates which we found first in State agencies and then in libraries, but our collection has now become so important that we are continuing to add to it although the cost per volume in time and effort becomes progressively greater each year.

Our Microfilm Division stems from Chapter 504, Acts of 1949 which directed Clerks of Court to abandon the abstract system and to provide the Commissioner of the Land Office with a microfilm copy of every deed, mortgage and release recorded during the year. For two years after this Act went into effect the Board of Public Works contracted with a private concern to do this filming for most of the State. It was the thought of the Comptroller and the Director of the Department of Budget and Procurement that the State might do this work more economically through one of its own agencies and we were asked to try it. The plans which were made during the fiscal year 1952 received your approval. The project only got under way, however, during fiscal year 1953.

Another of this group of functions recently acquired is that of "Records Management." For some years we have shared with the Board of Public Works the critical responsibility for the destruction of public records of all kinds. This is a field still relatively unexplored and full of pitfalls. We have, therefore, moved slowly, gaining experience and confidence as we went along. Last year Governor McKeldin thought that the time had come to step forth boldly and to organize a whole system of records disposal and records management at one time. He asked for an appropriation of \$48,000 from the General Assembly of 1952 to conduct a record survey of all State agencies. The contract for this work was awarded to Records Engineering, Incorporated, and you authorized me to serve as chairman of the Governor's special commission appointed to act as the State's representative in the conduct of this survey. While little was accomplished in fiscal year 1952, it was the period in which all the planning and orientation was done.

How many more responsibilities of this kind we shall assume in the future depends of course upon your judgment. Every public servant will want his agency to be of maximum service to the governmental unit which he serves. He must be sure, however, that original objectives, if they are still valid, are not forgotten in the process.

Respectfully submitted,

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Archivist