

County are being made, and the program should be in operation during the coming year.

Another records problem of the Clerks of Court which received our attention was the maintenance of adequate, up-to-date indexes for their records. It is imperative, of course, that indexes for such records as the land records be kept as current as possible. It is also desirable that the reference needed be located easily and quickly. In an effort to provide the searcher with the latest information, some Clerks maintain daily index sheets in handwritten form. Entries are made immediately after a document is recorded and later typed on the appropriate page in the permanent index. Other Clerks follow the practice of removing the index sheet from the permanent binder, typing the entry on it, and then reinserting the sheet in the index volume. Both methods are time-consuming and make keeping an index current a difficult task. In addition, the public demand for improved service has often resulted in expensive re-indexing projects. Searchers not only expect but often demand that the time needed to search indexes be kept to a minimum.

In order to ease the task of keeping indexes current and to eliminate expensive re-indexing, we recommended to the Comptroller that the Clerks of Court be permitted to contract for data-processed indexing service. Since all the Clerks, with one exception, wished to continue using their present Cott indexes, and because the service offered by the Cott Company was less expensive than that of its competitors, we recommended use of the Cott data-processed indexing service. The Comptroller approved this, with the proviso that each Clerk must ask for specific approval before contracting for the service.

How is data-processed indexing done? When instruments are received, index information is typed on daily index forms. The pressure-sensitive, self-adhesive strips of the original become the Clerk's typed index entry. The typed entries are compared with the instruments, then the perforated entry strips are separated, sorted alphabetically, the safety backing removed, and the strip pressed onto the proper index page. A carbon copy of the daily index form is retained by the Clerk and another mailed to the Cott Company. Cott makes punched cards from the daily index forms received, files the cards in security storage drawers according to the alphabetical subdivision of the Clerk's system, and refiles the cards during the year, if necessary, to create new set-out names. Cott also produces a magnetic tape which is stored for security