

Special Branch (Records Section)

1. The object of the Section is to give support to Special Branch by maintaining records and noting information so that it can be readily produced again at a later date if required. In addition, however, because reasoning on security matters is often based as much on negative answers as on positive information, it is essential that the records are kept in such a way that a "no trace" reply to an enquiry can be confidently given if such is the case.
2. To achieve this aim the Section performs a normal Registry function so far as the location of files and fresh incoming work is concerned (opening new files as required and storing them when action is complete) and maintains a Nominal Index and a Subject Index. All completed work received from Special Branch is subjected to routine processes to extract any information which should be recorded in the various Indexes, and there is also a separate unit dealing with Naturalisation cases. As a rough guide to the scope of the records there are about 300,000 files in existence and the Nominal Index contains over 900,000 slips.
3. All files are classified as "Confidential" and some of them are raised to the level of either "Secret (Pink)" or "Secret (Green)". The latter classification is used only for files which merit the "Secret" classification by Metropolitan Police standards, with the word "(Green)" added to distinguish it from the intermediate "Secret (Pink)" classification which for practical purposes is used for files on matters graded by other parties as "Secret" but which do not measure up to the meaning normally given to that word in this Office. "Secret (Green)" files are stored in the H.E.O.'s room and are never handled below E.O. level, but those in the "Secret (Pink)" category are handled by the staff although they are kept separately in the P.A.

4. Files are numbered under the same system as operates in the Registry, but there are the following additional refinements:-

4.1. Record Files - these are created for individuals who are either obviously of a security interest or who have come to notice often enough to suggest that they could become a security interest. As well as containing all reports dealing solely with the individual concerned, each file contains a "Record Sheet" enclosed in a pocket at the rear on which is recorded in precise form a reference to all mentions of the individual on any other files. If the system operates efficiently a Record File will contain or have a reference to everything that is known of the person concerned.

4.2. Subject Record Files - these employ the same system as in paragraph 4.1. above except that each file deals with a particular subject or "thing" as opposed to an individual.

4.3. Bulk Files - these are used to house repetitive things of a like nature (e.g. reports of arrivals and departures at Ports or accounts of meetings of a particular group) or as a means of collecting together information which is related but which comes to hand as separate items over a considerable period of time (e.g. names of persons who are members of a particular group of a subversive Association or suspect persons employed at a power station or place of similar national importance).

[References to Record Files as at paragraphs 4.1. and 4.2. above in any of the Indexes are distinguished by the use of a Pink Card or Slip as opposed to the usual White]

5. The Nominal Index was originally a card index, but as a result of the O. and M. recommendation has now been converted to a system of Paper Slips contained in Binders. There are now

over 2,300 Binders each of which holds between 350 and 400 Slips. The basic idea of the system is that each individual will only have one Slip in the Index (subject, of course, to the need to insert further Slips for aliases) no matter how frequently he comes to notice. To cater for this each Slip has enough space on the reverse for the inclusion of up to 3 or 4 additional mentions, and as soon as a Slip is full the normal procedure is to open a Record File as described in paragraph 4.1. above. The Record File is built up from the information on the existing White Slip (which is then destroyed and replaced by a Pink Slip) and thereafter all new information will be recorded on the Record File.

6. The Subject Index still uses the card system except that the Slip and Binder method is used for some of the Subsidiary Indexes. These Subsidiary Indexes are maintained with the Subject Index and, although physically apart, are constituent parts of it.
7. The Naturalisation unit deals solely with the opening and location of files in Naturalisation cases. Although it does use the facilities of the rest of the Section to some extent and gives rise to information to be included in the Nominal Index, it can be considered separately so far as the day to day work is concerned.
8. Details of the work procedures necessary to cope with the duties outlined above are given by the enclosed copy of Appendix VI of the Staff Inspector's report. This Appendix also includes estimates of the work loads and staff allowances for the clerical posts in respect of the procedures which it was possible to measure and fix an average time for each item. The work loads are calculated on a working year of 1,617 hours, i.e. the conditioned hours with due allowance for Bank Holidays, Holy Days, Privilege Leave, Annual Leave, refreshment breaks and some sickness.

9. Copies of further Appendices from the report are enclosed as follows:-

Appendix VII - summary of the work loads and staff allowances included in Appendix VI.

Appendix VIII - list of the procedures in Appendix VI which could not be measured and for which there is no staff allowance in Appendix VII.

Appendix IX - list of essential work left undone and foreseeable additional work.

10. As can be seen the staff inspection was carried out during 1964 and the calculations in Appendices VI and VII are therefore based on the work statistics for 1963. These statistics are set out in the tables attached to this note together with the 1964 statistics now to hand - these tables are in effect up-dated versions of Appendices IV and V of the Staff Inspector's report.
11. The staff allowances were subsequently re-assessed on the 1964 figures with the following result:-

<u>Work Procedure</u>	<u>Staff Allowance</u>
Indexing	4.523
Additions - direct from files to record sheets	.123
Additions - from slips to record sheets	1.646
Forms 2 - Indexing, etc., group	.207
New files - excluding Subject Index and Naturalisation	.776
Forms 2 - Subject Index	.414
New files - Subject Index	.076
Additions - to record sheets in Subject Index	.335
M.I.5 Forms - all stages	1.518
New files, etc. - Naturalisation cases	.637
Forms 2 - Naturalisation cases	.071
Locations - Nominal Index	1.5
Searches - Nominal Index	7.378
Total	<u>19.204</u>

12. At Clerical level the total in paragraph 11 takes full account of the measurable work but does not make any allowance for:-
 - 12.1. the effect over a full year of the augmentation to the police side of Special Branch - see item 3 of Appendix IX.
 - 12.2. the staff required to deal with the work which could not be measured, i.e. items 3, 5 (part), 6 (part), 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 of Appendix VIII.
13. To cover these matters it is considered that a further 3 officers are required at clerical level, making a total of 22 officers.
14. As can be seen from Appendix VI the duties at clerical level vary from simple copying work to tasks which require good quality Clerical Officers, whilst in between there are several jobs which are a mixture of these two extremes. It is considered that 12 posts should be graded for Clerical Officers and 5 for Clerical Assistants (an increase of 2 on the establishment for each grade) and that the remaining 5 posts should be graded as Clerical Officer/Clerical Assistant (variable) as at present.
15. At Executive Officer level it was not possible to measure any of the work, but it is clear from the detail of the duties set out in Appendix VI (i.e. paragraphs 6-8, 30-36, 37-44 (part), 49-50 and 60) that each of the 3 existing posts is fully loaded.
16. It is anticipated that the above staff will be sufficient to cope with the day to day work and also to enable the Executive Officer and other staff concerned to make gradual progress with the revision and weeding of the Subject Index. Further staff will be required, however, if any headway is to be made with the other work at present left undone, i.e. Weeding and Creeping Check of the Nominal Index and

Periodical Checking of Classified Documents (see items 2 and 4 of Appendix IX).

17. Creeping Check and Weeding of the Nominal Index

The O. and M. report recommended that this should be introduced as a permanent feature, and this is clearly desirable otherwise the Index will grow at an abnormal rate and eventually become cluttered up with old and useless information. It is considered that to keep the growth of the Index within reasonable bounds the creeping check and weeding should proceed at a rate which will cover the whole Index once every five years. To accomplish this it will be necessary to deal with between 9 and 10 binders (i.e. about 3,750 slips) each working week and this will involve:-

- 17.1. Perusing each slip to ascertain if the information on it is still of value (i.e. its age and content) and flagging or otherwise marking slips which could possibly be destroyed. This would include slips marked for possible destruction after 5 years (see paragraph 8.7 of Appendix VI). Regard would also be paid to the correct sequence of filing and any slips which contained obvious errors or omissions.
- 17.2. Referring to files as necessary to help decide if a slip could safely be destroyed or to resolve other matters revealed by the check. At this stage reference would be made to the list of files destroyed under the file weeding process (see paragraph 31 of Appendix VI), and opportunity would be taken to re-type any slips (referring to currently active individuals) which were in an untidy or dilapidated condition.

17.3. Deciding (in consultation with the H.E.O. and Special Branch, as necessary) which slips could be destroyed and arranging for additions and corrections to be made to other slips, as required.

18. A sample check indicated that each group of 9-10 binders (i.e. one weeks work at the suggested rate of progress) will produce about 700 slips as possible weeds together with a further 250 slips with either incomplete information or some query to be settled; and that to resolve these matters between 400 and 500 files would have to be drawn.
19. The estimated time required for one officer to complete each group of 9-10 binders is 105-110 hours, which means that at least three officers will have to be permanently employed on the work if the first check is to be completed in 5 years.
20. It is considered that additional staff of 1 Executive Officer, 1 Clerical Officer and 1 Clerical Assistant should be allocated for this work in the first instance. The Executive Officer might not be fully employed at times, but his work load will be completed if he also participates in and supervises the work of checking classified documents as described in paragraphs 21-22 below.
21. Periodical Check of Classified Documents

The procedure it is intended to introduce to satisfy the Government directive is as follows:-

 - 21.1. Once a month a list will be compiled of all files in circulation either in Special Branch or the Records Section, and both units will ensure that all these files are to hand.
 - 21.2. All "Secret (Green)" files in the above and a proportion of the others will be checked in detail to ensure that all the enclosures are intact.

21.3. The Records Section will confirm the existence of a sample of files marked "Put Away" and closely examine a proportion of these as in paragraph 21.2.

22. One additional officer will be required for this work at clerical level and it is suggested that a post graded as Clerical Officer/Clerical Assistant (variable) would be appropriate. The work would be supervised by the Executive Officer referred to in paragraph 20 above who would be personally responsible for the physical check of any "Secret (Green)" files.

23. Paperkeepers

The existing staff of 3 (including 1 Senior Paperkeeper) can cope with the present volume of work, but if the procedures described in paragraphs 17-22 above are introduced the movement of files in and out will increase by over 1,000 per week and 1 additional Paperkeeper will be required.

24. The staff proposals set out above can be summarised as follows:-

	<u>E.O</u>	<u>C.O</u>	<u>G.O/C.A</u> <u>(variable)</u>	<u>C.A</u>	<u>Senior</u> <u>Paper-</u> <u>keeper</u>	<u>Paper-</u> <u>keeper</u>
Routine Work (paras. 11-15)	3	12*	5	5	1	2
Creeping Check, etc. (paras. 17-20)	1	{ 1	-	1	-	1
Classified Documents, etc. (paras. 21-22)		{ -	1	-		
Totals	<u>4</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>

* Includes one officer with an allowance.

Record of New Files Opened

Subject and Subject No. of File			Year	
			1963	1964
<u>'A' Files on Individuals</u>				
(1)	I.R.A.	"335"	82	104
(2)	Fascist	"401"	193	127
(3)	Communist	"402"	1,236	1,343
(4)	Operation Post Report	"407"	95	99
(5)	Unclassified	"405"	942	994
(6)	Others	"	319	343
Total Group 'A'			2,867	3,010
<u>'B' Files on Subjects</u>				
(1)	Organisations	"400"	231	232
(2)	N.I.S. Forms	"301"	46	57
(3)	Miscellaneous	"371"	86	81
Total Group 'B'			363	370
'G' Naturalisation Cases			1,672	1,716
Total all Files, i.e. Groups 'A', 'B' and 'G' above			4,902	5,096

Record of Forms 2 Issued (i.e. incoming work linked with existing files)

<u>'D' Files on Individuals</u>				
(1)	I.R.A.	"335"	122	103
(2)	Fascist	"401"	56	109
(3)	Communist	"402"	870	1,338
(4)	Operation Post Report	"407"	61	97
(5)	Unclassified	"405"	589	646
(6)	Others	"	2,632	1,714
Total Group 'D'			4,330	4,607
<u>'E' Files on Subjects</u>				
(1)	Organisations	"400"	2,971	2,481
(2)	N.I.S. Forms	"301"	6,671	7,365
(3)	Miscellaneous	"371"	6,346	5,552
Total Group 'E'			15,988	15,398
'F' Naturalisation Cases			1,921	1,724
Total all Files i.e. Groups 'D', 'E' and 'F' above			22,239	21,129

Statistics of work performed in connection with the Nominal Index and Record Files

Description	Year	
	1963	1964
'A' Number of incoming telephone calls to Nominal Index	14,926	18,013
'B' Number of names searched in Nominal Index:-		
(1) In respect of correspondence and similar matters	66,526	80,331
(2) As a result of telephone requests (i.e. arising from 'A' above)	22,281	27,115
(3) Vetting enquiries	44,070	43,399
Total of Group 'B'	132,877	150,845
'C' New Slips prepared for Nominal Index	61,058	87,760
'D' Slips removed from the Nominal Index as a result of:-		
(1) Weeding	4,782	514
(2) Opening of new Record Files or Additions to existing Record Files	14,736	29,809
(3) Conversion to Composite Slips	7,488	11,203
Total of Group 'D'	27,006	41,526
'E' Net increase of Slips, i.e. 'C' minus total 'D' above	34,052	46,234
'F' Total number of Slips in Index at end of year	886,620	932,854
'G' Number of entries made on New Record Sheets:-		
(1) On opening the Record File	5,458	5,872
(2) On Subject Files in the Subject Index	669	1,124
Total of Group 'G'	6,127	6,996
'H' Number of entries made on Existing Record Sheets:-		
(1) Direct to Record Sheets	8,122	1,191
(2) From Slips to Record Sheets	11,851	26,615
(3) On Subject Files in the Subject Index	1,642	2,127
Total of Group 'H'	21,615	29,933
'I' Total entries on Record Sheets, i.e. 'G' plus 'H' above	27,742	36,929
'J' Weeding of Files:-		
(1) Number of Files examined	22,352	36,714
(2) Number of (1) above destroyed	16,896	29,173
'K' Number of existing files converted to Record Files	97	68