

ADPM COMES TO CARLETON



MR. KIMBLE WIRES
THE BOARD WHICH TELLS
MACHINE WHAT TO DO

The title of this article is not deliberately bureaucratic; it's just that the term "Automatic Data Processing Methods" is so long.

The name of the game is cumbersome enough, but the transition from manual to automatic methods of record-keeping in a college involves months of complications. It causes some embarrassment too, when we look at the ideal result and see the obvious gaps in our present system.

Most people are resigned to automation of all types, and many are quick to see that in every activity involving data we'll soon be able to do much more, do it better, and do it faster. As in the case of business, industry, and government, expansion and history have made it inevitable. The point is eventually reached where an organization cannot continue to operate "by hand" without an ever-increasing clerical staff, burgeoning paper work, duplication, and omissions.

Members of the faculty and administration began studying the requirement for conversion to machine methods about three years ago, under the leadership of Dean Richard C. Gilman. The idea was to determine the need and decide on the equipment, if warranted, before the point was reached where manual methods would be dangerously inefficient.

Many conferences and reports later, it was concluded that there was indeed a require-

ment and that the time to make the change was as soon as possible. IBM equipment was selected to do the job, and Mr. Graham Kimble was appointed Co-ordinator of Data Processing, with additional responsibilities as Instructor in Mathematics. An article on his appointment appears on page 39.

Carleton was one of six colleges given a grant by the Fund for the Advancement of Education of the Ford Foundation for a study of the administrative, research, and instructional uses of data processing equipment in colleges. The results of this study were useful in planning the establishment and operation of our data processing center.

GRADUAL CONVERSION

The conversion will be gradual. The Registrar's Office was the first to convert its system. The immediate result will be a considerable saving of student and faculty time formerly devoted to filling out forms, a material reduction of paper work and administrative procedures in the Registrar's Office, and prompter availability of specialized information to the faculty and administration.

Decisions in the registration process will continue to be made by individuals through the system of students meeting with their faculty advisors.

The next phase of conversion, now being entered, is conversion of the data on alumni. We have known for a long time that we had inadequate information, that much of it was outdated, and some of it inaccurate; but conventional methods were inadequate to correct all the deficiencies. We made progress, but there was always a backlog and certain projects were always "for future consideration."

One example of this is our name and address file. One-fourth of it changes every year, and the man-hours that go into keeping it up-to-date are staggering. When a complete clerical operation is involved in making a change, the possibility of error is so great that a system of careful checking and re-checking is required, adding to the man-

MISS PHYLLIS HENGEL WATCHES THE
402 "PRINT OUT" RESULTS



hours. Even so, mistakes creep in and alumni are "lost." Meanwhile, our Alumni Directory is out of date by the time it is printed.

Mechanization will not solve everything, but it will reduce the chance of error to a minimum, almost eliminate the time lag, and greatly improve our service. We hope to print our next Directory from machine records, and if all goes well we can offer a new - or at least updated - Directory every year.

The machines can solve other problems for us, too. Last year we spent months trying to develop a complete membership list of the Carleton chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, and another for the "C" Club. This type of operation should no longer be necessary. We should also be able to serve the special interests of our alumni. For example, if a particularly pertinent address is given on the campus which is of interest to ministers, we should be able to produce a list of the ministers among our alumni quickly and mail them copies. The same is true of doctors, lawyers, geologists, artists, and numerous others.

The importance of human judgment is not diminished under this system. Nobody is "just a number." What the machines do best is to sort, make lists, add, and subtract. It's still up to people to do the thinking.

REASONS FOR QUESTIONNAIRE

As noted above, there are some gaps in our information. This states the case rather mildly. To serve our alumni adequately, we need to know a great deal more about them. In the past it has not been feasible to gather, sort, and collate all the information that would be theoretically useful. Now that it is, and in order to take full advantage of our new capability, it is imperative that our records be complete. It is for this reason that a questionnaire is being mailed to all alumni during September. There is another reason, as noted in the letter accompanying the questionnaire. Dr. Headley's history of the College will contain a chapter on alumni, for which he needs certain information. It will



TOP: THE SORTER IN ACTION
BOTTOM: WORKING WITH THE COMPUTER

be obtained from Part II of the questionnaire, and will add greatly to the interest and pertinence of the history.

Valuable as it is, the conversion of records on students and alumni alone would not justify the cost of the equipment. Eventually all the records of the College will be "on cards," and the operations of the Business Office will be automated.

To accomplish all this, we have installed two IBM 026 card punches, an 082 sorter, an 085 collator, an 870 printer, and a 402 accounting machine. On order is a 407 accounting machine (to replace the 402) and a 519 reproducing card punch. This equipment is compatible with the 1620 computer we have had since 1962, so that we have a mutually-supporting system for both educational and administrative purposes.