

respective clerks of court and department heads to discuss problems relating to their records and assigned areas, and to determine future requirements.

In general, the survey indicated that:

- a) The quantity of records which might be destroyed under existing law was so small that their destruction would release little space for other purposes;
- b) The cost of microfilming records over twenty-five years old would be almost prohibitive;
- c) A central records depository for the storage of relatively inactive records could be established in the courthouse basement at a fraction of the cost of microfilming them;
- d) The establishment of such a depository and the re-arrangement of space in the courthouse would provide room for the additional courtrooms and offices needed in the immediate future, and
- e) A more permanent solution to the congested condition in the courthouse would result from the adoption of other methods of recording current records, i.e., microfilming.

As a result of the survey, we recommended that a central records depository be established in that part of the basement which was air-conditioned and that it be equipped with standard record-center shelving. We also recommended improvements to the area—i.e., tiling the floors, additional lighting, etc., which would make it available for use by the public, if necessary. The total cost of the equipment and improvements recommended were estimated to be approximately \$35,000. In addition, we strongly urged the use of recording systems for some record series, which would create records in other than paper form.

A detailed report of our findings and recommendations was submitted to the Courthouse Committee on March 17, 1964. It was subsequently reviewed by the other justices of the Supreme Bench and by the clerks of court. While the clerks were reluctant to abandon their present methods of recording, they all agreed that a central records depository would bring about an improvement in the courthouse and provide much of the additional space needed. However, there was considerable question as to whether the State or Baltimore City should bear the expense of equipping, staffing, and maintaining the depository. The clerks were also concerned about their legal responsibility for the