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COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

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R Dear Mr. Minshall:

This is in reply to your request of November 2, 1972, relating to statements made by Mr. Donald C. Harder regarding the use of hardware and software monitoring as a means for improving computer efficiency. The correspondence enclosed with your request is returned.

IMPROVING COMPUTER EFFICIENCY

Efficiency and effectiveness of automatic data processing (ADP) systems within the Federal Government is a major concern of the Congress and the General Accounting Office (GAO). This interest has led to

- the enactment of Public Law 89-306, which provides for the economic and efficient acquisition and utilization of computers by Federal agencies, and
- a study recently completed by GAO on the use of monitoring devices for improving computer efficiency.

Public Law 89-306 provides the General Services Administration (GSA) with authority for procuring all general-purpose ADP equipment for use by Federal departments and agencies. Also this law requires the Department of Commerce, through the National Bureau of Standards, to provide GSA and other agencies, upon request, with technical advisory services pertaining to ADP and related systems.

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

GSA's role in acquiring ADP equipment is consonant with its general procurement and contracting responsibilities under the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended (40 U.S.C. 471). Under the act, GSA is responsible for providing an efficient and economical system for the procurement of a wide variety of goods and services needed by agencies. The Federal Supply Service operates GSA's Government-wide procurement system which includes (1) a stores stock program, (2) a nonstores direct delivery program, and (3) a Federal Supply Schedule contract program.

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~~Under the Schedule contract program, certain supplies and equipment, including hardware and software monitoring devices, are made available to agencies under indefinite-quantity contracts. The contracts are listed by commodity classifications in Schedules which are published in catalog form. Each Schedule sets forth for each contract the specific items that may be procured, the prices, and other contract terms and conditions essential for agencies to place orders directly with suppliers.~~

Inquiries and proposals for placing monitoring devices in the Schedule contract program should be directed to Mr. George W. Dodson, Jr., Assistant Commissioner for Automated Data Management Services, Automated Data and Telecommunication Service, General Services Administration, 1121 Vermont Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20405. Telephone: 202-254-5374.

FEDERAL AUTOMATIC DATA PROCESSING
SIMULATION CENTER

On July 1, 1972, GSA established the Federal Automatic Data Processing Simulation Center to provide computer performance evaluation services to agencies of the Federal Government. The Center is operated by the U.S. Air Force. D.1892

The Center provides a central source for computer simulation and monitoring services, so that individual agencies will not need to develop independent capabilities to use advanced techniques of computer performance measurement and evaluation.

The Center's policies are established by a joint policy committee made up of representatives of GSA, the U.S. Air Force, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the National Bureau of Standards.

Inquiries and proposals for making a new analog form of computer monitoring available to the Center should be directed to Captain Michael F. Morris, USAF, Program Development Officer, Hoffman Building, 2461 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, Virginia 22314. Telephone: 703-325-0952.

NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS

In September 1971 the National Bureau of Standards established a task group to develop guidelines for computer system and component performance evaluation. The purpose for this task group is to identify and recommend procedures for

improving the operation of computer installations within the Federal Government and to assist the agencies in selecting computer components and systems. The task group's work program provides for identifying technically valid performance measurement criteria, techniques, and procedures. Toward this end the task group has been actively seeking information from Government agencies and suppliers of computer performance measurement and evaluation techniques. Upon completion of its study, the task group is to make recommendations regarding computer performance evaluation techniques and procedures for possible Government-wide use.

For more information about the task group, contact its chairman, Captain Michael F. Morris, USAF. (Same address as shown above.)

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MACHINES CORPORATION

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/ The International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) offered, for a price, hardware and software monitoring services for use on ADP systems. On May 10, 1971, IBM discontinued marketing these services to the general public. However, IBM monitors are still available as proprietary aids for use only by IBM personnel to support marketing recommendations. Also, effective May 10, 1971, no charge is being made for these monitoring services. c961

Other pricing and product line changes by IBM of a more important nature than the monitoring change have had an impact on some suppliers--in some cases antitrust actions have been taken by ADP suppliers. Also, in view of certain conditions considered to be of a monopolistic nature, the Attorney General of the United States, on January 17, 1969, entered a complaint against IBM in the District Court of the United States for the Southern District of New York charging violation of section 1 and 2 of the "act to protect trade and commerce against unlawful restraints and monopolies" (commonly known as the Sherman Anti-trust Act). We do not know, however, whether this complaint included monitoring policies and practices. Final judgment in this case has not been issued.

GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

GAO conducts reviews of various aspects of ADP systems management within the Federal Government. The most recent of these efforts resulted in a report to the Congress entitled "Opportunity for Greater Efficiency and Savings Through the

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Use of Evaluation Techniques in the Federal Government's Computer Operations" (B-115369, Aug. 22, 1972). This report principally addresses the use of hardware and software monitors as techniques for improving the efficiency of the Government's computer operations. It is concerned with the broad policy issue of the need to encourage the use of new techniques rather than the identification and/or evaluation of individual monitoring products. Enclosed is a copy of this report for your information and use.

Additional work to be performed by GAO in this area will be directed to developing policies, practices, and procedures to be used by Federal managers when making computer evaluation decisions.

We trust the foregoing information is responsive to your request.

Sincerely yours,

[Deputy

Comptroller General
of the United States

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The Honorable William E. Minshall
House of Representatives