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DRAFT SPEECH BY COUNCILLOR P.R.B. LEWIS  
ON THE COMMISSIONING OF THE CITY COUN-  
CIL'S NEW I.C.T. SERIES 1900 COMPUTER.

Mr. Mayor, Mr. Cilliers, (Ladies and) Gentlemen:-

As Mr. Cilliers has just told us, it is now thirty years since the Johannesburg City Council installed the first units of Hollerith punched-card equipment and, in so doing, laid the foundation stones of an association which has gone from strength to strength until it has reached what may be regarded as an ideal business relationship.

The history of this association reads like a biography. In 1936 this healthy child was born. Before it was ten years old, it had already proved its ability and enabled the Council to weather the storms and stresses prompted by the manpower shortages of World War II. Growing all the time and taking over new tasks almost every year, its 17th birthday was celebrated by the order for the first of a series of electronic multipliers. As teens gave way to manhood so did the sophistication of the equipment develop and the type 555 Plug-programmed Computer was installed. By 1960 our personality, 24 years old, had developed to a degree previously unknown - the introduction of the Type 1301 Computer. Commissioning followed within a short space of time and the public (and yes the Council too), began to realise the potential of this powerful young man. Development and progress advanced hand in hand until today - 30 years old - our lusty baby has reached a maturity unparalleled in this City and rivalled only by brother Orion in Cape Town.

But let us now examine what this association with I.C.T. has meant in the past. Mechanisation and automation have played no small part in the development of our City's financial administration. The growing shortage of

manpower/.....

manpower over the years has more often than not been countered by developments in the data processing field. An early example of this was the application during World War II of equipment for the compilation of electricity, water and gas accounts.

In the immediate post-war years, further equipment was obtained to cope with the ever-expanding needs of the City Council. The development and application of the electronic multipliers and calculators in turn facilitated the determination of charges for utilities and also the preparation of the Non-European payroll. Stores control was simplified and procedures were streamlined.

When the 1301 Computer was installed in 1963, a new stage was reached in the evolution of utility billing. Housing loan accounts were taken over as was the compilation of sales analyses and statistics relative to the sale of liquor to Bantu. Complex calculations could now be done for Engineers engaged on the construction of major highways, and data obtained from traffic and transport surveys speedily analysed.

Permeating all this development and progress, has been the never-failing guidance and assistance of the I.C.T. organisation. Facilities for appreciation, testing and training were made readily available. Council officials were even sent overseas at the Company's expense to view demonstrations of the latest equipment available, thus enabling them to keep abreast of developments in this field.

More recently, when the order for the latest multi-program unit - the 1904 you see before you - had been placed, I.C.T. offered to allocate time on a similar computer in London last March to enable the Council's officials to carry out the editing of programmes already written. The Council gratefully

accepted/.....



accepted this offer as it meant the new equipment would be fully operational immediately it had been installed.

All this liaison has been carried out in the most friendly manner and I am prepared to say that no business relationship could be more harmonious than that which exists today between I.C.T. and the City Council.

And now what of the future? In a few moments the Mayor will set in motion this most efficient-looking battery of equipment known as an I.C.T. Type 1904 Computer. This is one of the most powerful units in this country. It has multi-programming facilities, a large core store and a flexible peripheral configuration. It is capable of being extended by the addition of further peripheral equipment without having to modify the central processor. The bugbear of early obsolescence has thus been virtually removed.

This equipment will involve the City Council in hire charges of nearly R9,500 per month, against which there will be a saving of approximately R6,000 per month in hire charges in respect of the 1301 which it replaces and a further R3,600 per month in respect of the conventional I.C.T. punch card equipment, the work load of which will be taken over by the new computer.

The first task of the 1904 will naturally be to take over the work presently performed by the 1301 computer. Phase II involves the acceptance of the work load of the conventional punch card equipment to which I have just referred. These programmes have already been written and tested so that the change over will be smooth. Phase III involves breaking new ground. For some time now experts have been busy behind the scenes on feasibility studies relative to the replacement of existing accounting procedures, both manual and mechanised, by new systems involving the use of the 1904. These studies cover the economics of operation and the problems of communication.

The accelerated tempo of modern business insists that efficient management and financial control can only be maintained by the ready availability of accurate and up-to-date costs. The City Council is determined that the leading position which it holds in financial management today, is to be maintained in the future. With the continued assistance and co-operation of I.C.T., I am confident that this will be done.

However, the use of the 1904 is not confined to financial matters. More and more the other Departments of the Council are becoming aware of the speed and versatility of this equipment, and requests are being received from both technical and other departments for assistance in tackling and solving problems which would otherwise be uneconomic, if not impossible, by conventional methods.

The potential is so vast as to be almost frightening, but with the confidence engendered by the successful association of I.C.T. and the Council over the past 30 years, I for one, have no fears in regard to our ability to meet and conquer any problem which may present itself.

Thank you Mr. Cilliers and your associates at I.C.T. for your service in the past and long may it continue.

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