NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY THE FORUM

(a) Financial support for research

It became apparent that investigations at the pure research levels are in need of financial support (in relation to the funds assigned to the developmental level) but we did not discuss this problem in any detail because different kinds of action would be needed in the several countries represented.

(b) Specific needs in research

We identified two major specific needs:

(i) a large, well-designed test collection (with questions and relevance judgements) for use by anyone testing ideas for IR systems or parts of systems;

(ii) an operating information service which could be used as a source of data and a test-bed for new ideas.

Although these two ideas were discussed together and were to some extent confused, there is a fundamental distinction in that the first would be something researchers could take away and do what they liked with, whereas the second would be an operating system providing services to a genuine group of users. This does not of course imply that the two could not be combined in some way (eg the test collection taken from the operating service).

(c) Development of the subject

The view as expressed that the development of theoretical information science was likely to be inhibited by close association with the training of professional librarians. Some participants thought that the new research needed would stand a better chance of taking off if appropriate institutions were set up in countries not yet committed to such association. Another view
was that information science will attain the autonomy necessary for its rapid development only in an institution wholly devoted to teaching and research (both operational and theoretical) in information science and set up in a university in which it can draw freely on experts in any of its related subjects. But the value of interaction with the practical problems of information system development was also stressed.