

# Tens of millions of documents and hundreds of thousands of books, photographs, films, and testimonies on their way to the new building

at the end of the new Historical Museum. The new Archives building has been made possible by a generous contribution from the Claims Conference under the leadership of Rabbi Dr. Israel Miller, Claims Conference President, and other contributors.

To prepare for their relocation to the new building, the documents archive, photograph and film archive, as well as the library temporarily

concerning the logistics and planning in preparation for the move." Just as the library's users were anxious about the library closing, the library staff is anxious to make it work the very best way possible. "We rethought, reorganized and revamped the collection of the reading room in order to provide a better service to the public," says Robert.

While books get new stickers in the library,

organized in thousands of files that make up close to 300 record groups which need to be dealt with in the document archives. Each and every one of those 50 million documents must be disinfected before they can be placed in the box in which they belong. Then the boxes need to be bar-coded and placed in the appropriate record group.

One of those files that needed repackaging,

## O V E R V I E W I N G



closed their doors to the public pending the move to their new state-of-the-art facilities. Esther Aran is in charge of the planning together with the directors of the different archive departments and Dr. Yaacov Lozowick, Director of the Archives, all of whom are supervising every stage and detail of the project to facilitate the relocation.

A new service involving the integration of the library and all archive data banks is currently being established by Yehudit Levin. This service, facilitated by Michael Lieber, Yad Vashem's CIO, will offer the public improved, upgraded access in the year 2000.

Meanwhile, behind the library's closed doors, where quiet would ordinarily reign, the 80,000 books and several thousand journals are being aired, cleaned, and checked for legible labels as the entire collection gets ready to move to its new home. The Director of the library, Dr. Robert Rozett, is busy dealing with the step-by-step planning. "We are moving in 20-meter units, mapping out sections of 20 meters in the current library, and moving the books in them to their allocated space in the new library. We have invested a great deal of thought



the 100,000 photographs in the photograph collection are being scanned — an operation started in mid-July. Professionals who have been working in two shifts are expected to complete the scanning in November. However, although the scanners and computers used for this task are the best that modern technology can offer, the project of scanning Holocaust-related photographs does not always run so smoothly.

At times, even professionals cannot bear the sight of these images. The scenes depicted in a number of these photographs are so cruel that those who work with them need to pause, breathe in some fresh air, and let off steam before they return to scan an additional picture.

"Completing this work," says Daniel Uziel, Director of the Photograph and Film Archive, "means that the public will have on-line access to the photograph archive. At first, access will be possible via computer terminals in Yad Vashem, and at a later stage through the Internet."

In addition to the 100,000 photographs the photo and film archive has to process and the 80,000 books requiring attention in the library, there are over 50 million documents



Dr. Yaacov Lozowick recalls, contained around 700 postcards sent to Relico, a welfare organization that dispensed food packages (each containing a return postcard) to Jews living in occupied Europe during the war. "There is a lot to learn from these postcards," says Yaacov, "which provide information about where the Jews were living, when they were living there, as well as information relating to the food package itself. A certain man wrote on his reply card, for example, that the previous time he had received the package it had weighed 600 grams whereas that time it weighed only 350."

On his laptop computer Yaacov Lozowick opens a document showing a table indicating every single step concerning the move, which is scheduled to be completed at the end of October. Yaacov believes it will take at least another year for all data banks to be integrated and for the employees to become fluent in the new computer programs.

While almost all of the Archive departments have closed their doors to prepare for the move, there are still two departments with their doors wide open to serve the public: the Hall of Names and the Oral Testimonies Department.