

dubious. We have even greater fear that the law in some cases is of small concern to those in law enforcement who become overeager in enforcement of that law as they view it. We do not want to see the intended good use of a data center distorted so that it simply makes confidential information more readily available to more people.

Nor do we wish to see a composite picture of an individual recorded in a single informational warehouse, where the touch of a button would assemble all the governmental information about the person since his birth. Such a hypothetical situation could become very real, because into a data bank could be deposited records covering his birth, schooling, military service, employment history, personality traits, credit status, and practically any other aspect of his life. Although the personal data bank apparently has not been proposed as yet, many people view this proposal as a first step toward its creation. I am sure there will be pressures—both within and outside Government—to create one in the future, all, of course, in the interest of economy and efficiency.

The presence of these records in Government files is frightening enough, but the thought of them neatly bundled together into one compact package is appalling. We cannot be certain that such dossiers would always be used by benevolent people for benevolent purposes.

The possible future storage and regrouping of such personal information also strikes at the core of our Judeo-Christian concept of "forgive and forget," because the computer neither forgives nor forgets. We are told that the computer can be programed to program out derogatory and confidential information; what we fear is the ability to program it in.

We also recognize the obstacles that would be cleared away by a data bank for the researcher, when statistics are instantly available at his asking. But we also recognize the danger implicit in such power which would enable a less scrupulous person—or even a well meaning but overzealous Government official—to delve behind the statistics, to the respondent, and learn the inner secrets of an individual. Shall we create an elite who can narrow and dominate the "corridors of power"? And who shall they be?

We also are aware that vast governmental projects are being undertaken to help develop America, and that the Federal Government seeks new information about social and economic conditions to plan and operate these programs. But such programs should not be at the cost of individual privacy.

What we are looking for is a sense of balance. We do not want to deprive ourselves of the rewards of science; we simply want to make sure that human dignity and civil liberties remain intact. We would like to know just what information would be stored in a national data center; who would have access to it; who would control the computers; and, most importantly, how confidentiality and individual privacy would be protected. Thought should be given to these questions now, before we awaken some morning in the future and find that the dossier bank is an established fact, and that liberty as we knew it vanished overnight.

Perhaps new guidelines and safeguards will have to be established to correspond with the sudden development of the computer. Perhaps a new concept in file accessibility will have to be formulated, under