

which a person may have the right to examine his own file, or at least have the right of appeal, so that he can insure the accuracy and completeness of his dossier.

These are some of the questions to which we are seeking answers. We believe that once both sides—the need for technological advance and the right of privacy—have been presented before this subcommittee, their inseparability will become obvious, and a sense of balance hopefully will be achieved.

The issue is not whether a statistical data bank can be established nor whether it would be beneficial. A statistical data bank can be established and great benefits can be derived from it.

However, there appears to be a great imbalance between technology on the one hand, and the law and public interest on the other. The issue is, therefore, can we achieve a balance so as to assure that technological progress will serve man and that man's free will will dominate in the new environment that the computer is rapidly bringing about?

Mr. Rosenthal, you have a statement?

STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN S. ROSENTHAL, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Mr. Chairman, at the outset of our second series of hearings, I would like to reaffirm my appreciation of your efforts, and Chairman Dawson's wisdom in establishing this special inquiry. I believe we have already had considerable impact—and creative influence which brings honor to the entire Committee on Government Operations, and the Congress as a whole.

My own personal reaction to the proposal for a National Data Center was, I suppose, similar to that of most citizens—intense apprehension at the prospect of still more invasions of personal privacy. In so many areas technological progress is being secured at the expense of personal liberty. The projected National Data Center seems an almost too fitting symbol for that development. And yet, I admit, there is the continual danger of excessive reaction and inordinate fear. For the problem of balancing the benefits and costs of progress is subtle and requires careful study and prudent judgment.

I approach the issue with initial skepticism. I have yet to be convinced of the necessity for a central bank of highly personal data on all American citizens. I have yet to learn why each agency cannot maintain its own files. And I find it hard to believe that the improved efficiency afforded by the Center would outweigh the clear risks.

Even with the most precise safeguards, we must continue to ask ourselves certain basic questions. Is the increased threat to personal liberty too great a price to pay for the anticipated efficiency and progress? Are we sacrificing too many aspects of our personal lives for limited objectives? Does the additional knowledge we might gain yield benefits to society greater than the losses to the individual?

I intend to ask these questions of all witnesses before this committee. I will not be satisfied with any witnesses who favor the establishment of a National Data Center and who fail to answer such questions satisfactorily. I propose to inquire if adequate safeguards can be formulated so that we can benefit from the growth of technology in