

confidentiality of replies to statistical inquiries, just as much interested.

My life work is in the field of statistics. I am absolutely convinced that the success of the American statistical program is the confidentiality it provides respondents. I am convinced this is true whether the reply is mandatory or whether it is voluntary, because it gets us rid of going through all the weeks of sending it to the legal department in the business firm to see whether they are going to answer it or not answer it.

We have an excellent relation with the business community, and we want to protect that.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Where it is on a voluntary basis and where they know it is adequately protected and not going to be exchanged with other information, the American business community has been very willing to give you information on a voluntary basis. Will not this well of voluntary flow now dry up if they know you are going to put it in a central data bank where the IRS and Census keys might get mixed up some afternoon?

Mr. BOWMAN. Mr. Chairman, all I can say is that we have to assure them in the same way we have in the past.

Mr. GALLAGHER. They have not been very greatly assured in some aspects of some of the agencies that may feed information into the central data bank.

Mr. BOWMAN. I put in my testimony the fact that at the present time in order to save business firms the need for unnecessary reporting, the Census Bureau has been given access under regulations of law to IRS returns. Here you have made in a sense the data center within the Census Bureau. You have added to their own information this other body of information. In this case we are going to substitute one for the other, but in some other instances we will merely be using it to supplement some census information. Everyone is assured that when it gets to the Census Bureau it will not have any less confidentiality than it had in IRS. In fact, maybe they are assured it will have more.

I would hope if we organize a data center, people will be convinced that any data that are put in the Data Center that have less confidentiality in the place where it came from, may still have that less confidentiality there but it will have the greater confidentiality of the Data Center. The success of a data center for the purpose that I am interested in, for statistical purposes, is in being able to develop a data center in which that confidentiality will really be recognized.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Of course, if confidentiality does exist, you are performing a very useful purpose; but I cannot help but remember a letter I got not too long ago wondering whether or not one of the drop-outs from the IRS lock-picking school might now be in charge of the Data Center.

Mr. BOWMAN. Here we are beginning to introduce a lot of things. Here we are saying—

Mr. GALLAGHER. We are talking about things that are protected by law, and you are trying to demonstrate to me that, despite the great temptation that will now exist for people who have access to information gather by agencies other than their own, no one is going to do it.

Mr. BOWMAN. No, I am not. I am indicating how difficult this situ-