

formation about specific groups, regions of the country, performance of industries, et cetera. In making tabulations of data, however, the Census Bureau carefully omits those classifications which might enable anybody to figure out information about individual firms or persons.

There are, of course, other Federal agencies which must by their very nature use information about individuals and firms for their operations. Thus for example the Internal Revenue Service not only must collect information about people's income and the taxes they pay, but this information can and should be used to prosecute tax fraud or tax evasion. Similarly, the Social Security Administration must process information about each individual over a period of years, recording his job status, family status, et cetera. This information is necessary for the determination of social security payments. Such use of individual information is of course justified, necessary, and legal. On the other hand, it is a real question whether tax returns or social security records should be turned over to other groups who may wish to use them for other purposes if the persons or firms to whom the records refer may individually be affected thereby. The question of the proper or improper use of information by different agencies is indeed a ticklish one, and procedures should be developed by both the executive branch and the legislative branch which will protect confidentiality and insure the privacy of the individual. In a great many instances, agencies may wish to obtain information not for operating purposes, but in order to make policy decisions and to guide future operations. Thus the Office of Education has a real interest in knowing how college enrollments may be expected to develop in the future. Those concerned with questions of poverty wish to know the dimensions and structure of this problem. In a great many of these instances, the agencies in question have contracted with the Census Bureau to provide them with such general information based upon sample surveys. In these instances, a disclosure and confidentiality rule must be developed which will protect the individual and yet yield the general information which is required.

In addition to the primary question of preserving the privacy of the individual, there are additional related questions which deserve careful consideration.

It is unfortunately true that because the United States possesses a highly decentralized statistical system individuals and, in particular, businesses may be required to fill out a large number of forms from different agencies asking for essentially the same kind of information. Business firms often complain that they spend a great deal of time and effort in making out reports to a variety of different government agencies, and that their life would be considerably simplified if the different groups could get together and make a single request for information which they would share. With respect to sample surveys, it is also true that a number of different Government agencies construct special samples to obtain information which they need for policy guidance, and because these samples are done independently little consideration is given to whether related work going on elsewhere in the Government might not be adapted to serve a number of different purposes at the same time. Careful consideration given to problems such as this might well cut down the bother, expense, and exasperation of