What I am speaking of is, is it possible to establish such a central data bank without personal identification?

Mr. RUGGLES. I would think that for the vast majority of records this would be true, yes.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Would you recommend that be done?

Mr. RUGGLES. If each individual were assigned a number instead.

Mr. GALLAGHER. You are still leaving his fingerprints on your record.

Mr. RUGGLES. That is right. You must link records. In order to link records, you need some form of identification.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Then it is impossible to set up a central data bank without eliminating the identification of an individual?

Mr. RUGGLES. Or company or any other unit with which you are dealing.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Therefore, personal identification would have to be a significant factor in establishing your central data bank?

Mr. RUGGLES. I would say in order to process information, this is correct. There has to be some identification of a unit; otherwise you would have no idea whether you had duplicates in your system; you would have no idea as to whether you had coverage of the same group of people or the same establishments from different sources. It would be what was referred to here as an "electronic garbage disposal."

Mr. ROSENTHAL. There is no way to refine the input in this sophisticated machinery to eliminate that in advance?

Mr. RUGGLES. It would be very simple, as suggested here, to have a key that would assign a new identification number to each unit that you were using so that there would be no visible connection between any record you had and any meaningful identification.

Mr. GALLAGHER. But if you had a key, you could match it up?

Mr. RUGGLES. That is right.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. The key could control a group of individuals so we would have no way to break it down as to who the individual involved was.

It doesn't make sense to me at all. In other words, you say there is no way of eliminating the possibility of error being fed twice into the machine without individual information?

Mr. RUGGLES. You see, one of the problems in bringing records together that you are trying to match, is to make sure, that the records do in fact refer to the same unit. Supposing you have one set of records that tells about the employment of the husband. Another set of records tells about the employment of the wife. You have to bring the records of that household together so that you can see what effect certain factors may have upon the participation of the wife in the labor force. This means there has to be some method of identifying a household. This may be an address. In many cases it wouldn't be a name. The address is used in the case of establishments very often because many times a name is ambiguous. A name is only one piece of information about a unit.

Mr. GALLAGHER. The name is not ambiguous to the bearer of the name.

Mr. RUGGLES. Often it is spelled differently. Sometimes the first name is used instead of the last name or the middle name.

Mr. GALLAGHER. To me it is not an ambiguous situation for you to have all of my records. I know you have my records.