

Mr. HORTON. And much of this information is probably already available and it is now just a case of getting it in one central Federal system, or one central Federal place. Even though it is going to be proposed for statistical information only, the information will be there. Then the thing that bothers me is not so much that there may be the fellow who can steal the information or can tap in, eavesdrop, pick it up and disseminate it, but that it is going to be the call in 5 or 10 years from now on the basis of, "This is good for the country. This is something we need to know." In this way, these personal rights will be dissipated. This is a concern I have, too. In spite of the benefits of the system and the good that can follow from having this information, tapping it in and taking it for the public good will in essence do away with the individual's rights because all this information can be gathered in one place.

Mr. SQUIRES. I don't think the gathering of it physically in one place is at all a prerequisite for the existence of a Federal data center, or whatever you want to call it. Perhaps it is in terms of this specific proposal, but in more general terms, the physical location of this data in one place is not at all necessary.

Mr. HORTON. But this does create problems because, as I have understood it, the dispersal of this information at the present time is one of the safeguards that we now have. But if it is centered in one place, then it becomes a more serious problem, doesn't it?

Mr. SQUIRES. Yes, I would say it does.

Mr. HORTON. I think what we are concerned about now is the centralization of this, although I think our attention is going to be somewhat directed to the fact that some of this information is already gathered in some of these specific agencies and it is being used.

Mr. SQUIRES. It seems to me that one of the real problems we face as we gather more and more of this data is that it is difficult to make an intelligent and informed judgment on whether the need to know is as urgent as the need to protect the rights of the individual. When one queries general, popular sorts of opinion and points out the social advantages of knowing this information, the popular opinion will tend to say, "Let's have it," and, "What's all the secrecy about" and, "Why does he want to protect this information. Is he some kind of a criminal, or what?"

It will tend to point the guilty finger at those trying to protect our rights of privacy.

Mr. HORTON. I thank you, Mr. Squires. I think you have made an excellent statement and you have outlined to us what the problem is in this whole area. I appreciate your coming before the subcommittee.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Mr. Squires, would you agree with Mr. Baran that any statistical data center, at the stage we are now in the computer business, that it would not be impossible to identify an individual if his records are programed into the data center?

Mr. SQUIRES. This depends not only on how the information is stored perhaps, but also on the kinds of access that are allowed to it. Let me suppose, for example, the information is stored in the system in such a way that there is no identity given. The social security numbers are completely divorced from the rest of an individual's file, for example—