

of all information provided to each individual user so that violations of disclosure rules will be apparent.

One of the strongest supporters of the new identification and intelligence system has been the Civil Liberties Union, which has argued that the new system regularizes the kind of information available, increases its accuracy, and protects the rights of the individuals involved. The identification and intelligence system itself has no operational or administrative responsibilities. It has been set up as an independent and impartial organization designed to meet legitimate requests for information and to protect against the misuse of information. It is interesting to note in this connection that the new agency does have responsibilities to provide data within proper disclosure rules for legitimate research work in the fields of crime, juvenile delinquency, mental health, and other concerns of social research.

The key to the problem of protecting privacy is not to depend blindly upon the inefficiency which may accompany decentralization—in many instances the decentralization may result in flagrant abuses which are difficult to uncover simply because of the extent of the decentralization. Furthermore, the problem of controlling disclosures cannot be solved, as has been suggested by some, by special devices such as eliminating the names of people in the central files, or collecting only a sample of the total data. As has been pointed out above, the matching of individual records is essential for the proper construction of statistical data, and impairment of the possibility of matching by omission of major identifying characteristics or by restriction of the data to samples is highly undesirable.

Instead, the problem should be attacked frontally in a manner similar to that currently pursued by the Bureau of the Census. The establishment of a national data center which will pool information obtained from all cooperating agencies would provide an opportunity to develop the required safeguards against improper disclosure of information both within government and outside of it. This will do more to insure individual privacy than permitting the present uncontrolled system of data access to continue. As has been pointed out by all of the previous reports on the topic, the pooling of data will at the same time reduce the redundancy and the cost of obtaining and maintaining statistical data, vastly improve the statistical base, and remove from operating government agencies the burden of servicing purely informational needs of those outside the originating agency.

Finally, by creating a national data center which supplements the present statistical system and improves the coordination and integration of data, we will still be able to retain the present advantages of decentralization which now provide a maximum amount of freedom for each government agency to determine its own statistical program and thus encourage innovation and experimentation.

Chairman TALMADGE. Thank you, Dr. Ruggles, for a very fine statement.

You testified we have too much duplication of effort in the statistical program. Will you give us some examples.

Mr. Ruggles. Yes, I think I can.

A wide variety of Government agencies collect information on establishments. If this information could be collected on a joint basis it would eliminate the need for the same establishment to file reports saying practically the same thing to different agencies.