

guards of disclosure would perform statistical services both for them and for outside users, thus taking the burden of performing such services off the operating agencies.

Chairman TALMADGE. Without objection, I would like to insert in the record as an appendix to these hearings the "Report of the Task Force on the Storage of and Access to Government Statistics." (See page 196.) I believe that the report indicated that if the task force were to design a Federal statistical system de novo, it would clearly recommend the creation of a single central statistical agency. Why did the task force then go only part way in recommending a national data center?

Mr. RUGGLES. I think because any system is the result of evolution. Perhaps if you were to build New York City brand new today it would not be the same New York City that you happen to have at this moment. However, it is not therefore rational to destroy New York City and build a new city in the same location. I think the same thing applies to statistical systems.

One of the reasons why the U.S. system is more decentralized than those of other countries is that we started earlier, and we have more statistical capital involved in our present decentralized system than many countries who came later to the statistical field and designed a system at that time. You take advantage of the resources you have and you adapt them accordingly.

Chairman TALMADGE. What would be the principal functions of such a center?

Mr. RUGGLES. Of a national data center?

Chairman TALMADGE. Yes.

Mr. RUGGLES. I would conceive as its principal function would be supplying the kinds of information required for the design and implementation of policy.

Chairman TALMADGE. How much would it cost?

Mr. RUGGLES. This is a difficult question to answer because it is highly related to the cost of our present decentralized statistical system. In many cases a national data center would reduce costs, mainly because functions that are now carried out very expensively in different statistical agencies would be to a central facility.

On the other hand, I think anyone who has looked at the rate of increase in the budgets of the statistical agencies and seen how fast these are rising could not reasonably expect an actual reduction in total cost in the near future due to a creation of a national data center.

I do not think we can foresee; this will depend largely on the needs that are placed upon it.

Initially, the Kaysen committee, I think, felt that a starting budget of some \$3 to \$5 million would be required.

Chairman TALMADGE. How long would it take to become operational?

Mr. RUGGLES. If it undertook at first the bringing together of some of the most important data I would expect that it could become operational very quickly, indeed.

Chairman TALMADGE. What do you think would be the proper administrative set up for it?

Mr. RUGGLES. We have already discussed this question, and I would agree that I am somewhat perplexed as to just how it should be lodged within the Government. I feel it is essential for such an organization