

Ervin Campaigns For Citizen's Rights

Senator Sam Ervin of North Carolina continues his most admirable campaign in Congress to preserve the citizen's right to privacy. Senator Ervin, with some cause, distrusts the new computerized technology that the U. S. government is adapting to its purposes of keeping track of all Americans.

Computers just can't be trusted, Senator Ervin says, because they are capable of great error. He recalls the fact that last year the Social Security Computer decided that he was dead and sent him a lump sum death settlement for \$754. In another instance, the computer at the Internal Revenue Office notified him that he had failed to pay his June installment on estimated taxes. He had paid the installment on time, but the IRS computer feeders were just behind in their job. So, Senator Ervin knows whereof he speaks.

To a large extent, Big Brother is already watching everyone, thanks to advances in computerization. Not long ago, the Senate Administrative Practices Subcommittee found that the names of all Americans are in government files 2,800 million times. Social Security numbers are listed 1,500 million times, police records, 264,000 million times, medical histories, 342 million times and psychiatric histories 279 million times.

And still the information seekers persist. Recently a number of elderly, disabled & retired people complained that the Bureau of the Census was asking them such questions as Do you have any artificial dentures?

Taking things all together, would you say you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy these days? How many different newspapers do you receive and buy regularly. If the form wasn't filled out and returned to the Census Bureau, the recipient would receive a second form by certified mail, then a telephone call, and finally a visit from an employe of the Bureau.

Senator Ervin found that the Census Bureau was conducting this survey for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. In fact, the Census Bureau stays busy; in the past 3 years, the Bureau has conducted 87 surveys, covering six million persons, for 24 governmental agencies. All the information was then fed into computers.

Senator Ervin fears that, without proper safeguards, the information gathered by government agencies could be used unwisely and without regard to the citizen's right to privacy. He suggests a number of controls to guarantee security, and he has introduced several measures to insure that

the government's information on individuals will be gathered kept, and used with discretion.

So far, no action has been taken on any of the Senator's proposals; apparently many of his colleagues do not share his great concern over the need to protect Americans from an all-encompassing and impersonal government. Maybe they too will jump on the bandwagon when Social Security declares them dead, or when the Internal Revenue Service decides to sell information about them to mail order firms. Just maybe.

Richmond Va., News Leader

Extends Hand Of Friendship

Illinois Democrats, split since the Chicago convention debacle, evidently have kissed and made up. Mayor Daley showed up at a picnic of liberal Democrats in Libertyville, put his arm around one of his party enemies, Adali E. Stevenson III, and extended the hand of friendship to Sen. George McGovern of South Dakota, with whom he has quarreled publicly. National politics hasn't seen anything like it since Hubert H. Humphrey linked arms with Gov. Lester Maddox of Georgia. . . . Milwaukee Sentinel

Apple Crop Too Good!

An old farmer was an incurable grumbler. One fall he had the best apple crop for miles around. A neighbor stopped to congratulate him.

"Well Hiram, you sure ought to be happy now," he said. "You've got the finest apple crop ever raised in these parts."

The other farmer grumbled: "Well, I suppose it will do but where's the rotten ones for the hogs?" -Philnews



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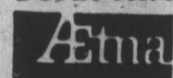


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