

The FBI's fingerprint files, a small part of all its records, fill this gigantic drill hall.



# YOU

storehouse of information on his citizens.

a census taker, or a surveyor for the Federal Reserve Board, or some other person seeking information about the family comes around, his wife feels free to exaggerate the income figure. She will boast that her husband is in the \$6,000-\$7,000 bracket, instead of leaving him in the \$4,000-\$5,000 bracket, where he is supposed to be.

The unfortunate part is that investigators trying to trap racketeers or other law evaders often have trouble getting information which might convict them. The various Federal agencies nominally work with each other. But in many cases, the information gathered by one agency is not readily available to investigators of another agency.

For instance, even agents of the Internal Revenue Service cannot get information from the Social Security Administration, for which the IRS acts as collector, without presenting a written case giving strong evidence that someone with fraud in his heart is at work.

And no one in the Federal government has access to your income-tax return—outside of the Internal Revenue Service itself—except representatives of Congressional committees, working under prescribed safeguards.

Virtually all the information you give to the Federal government is for a specific agency to use for a specific purpose, and it is protected by many safeguards.

Through what agencies does Uncle Sam obtain his vast treasure-house of information?

In countless ways, year in and year out, Uncle Sam is gathering information, or having it sent to him. A lot of it deals with such impersonal things as the weather, but much of it has to do with people—you and me.

Through the Internal Revenue Service, the Federal government each year receives

at least 60 million income-tax reports from individuals. In addition, the IRS receives some 200 million forms a year from corporations and employers, giving information on social security payments and other data required by law.

Through the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Secret Service, Army Intelligence, and the intelligence divisions of the other armed services, Uncle Sam is ferreting out information about thousands of citizens suspected of crimes ranging from filching a spare tire off an Army truck to high treason.

The FBI each year gets the fingerprints of additional millions of persons. If you're an American citizen, over 18, the chances are good that the FBI has *your* prints.

Through the Federal Reserve System, which hires independent agencies to make surveys of consumer buying habits and credit practices, Uncle Sam gathers data about the economic life of the nation.

Through the Bureau of the Census, he gets detailed information about the nation's population every decade. Besides counting heads every 10 years, the census bureau takes censuses of trade and manufacturing, agriculture, transportation, and mineral industries every five years.

"The Bureau of Census is well described as the fact finder for the nation," director Roger W. Burgess points out. "It also might be called the record keeper for the nation, for the statistical reports which are the principal product of the bureau's fact-collecting activities provide a record not only of the number of American people but of the changes in the characteristics of the population and of the farms, factories, stores, and other businesses in which Americans make their livings."

From census statistics, you can learn everything from the amount of rickrack braid made in the U. S. (211,117,000 yards in 1947), to the number of women bill collectors (3,450 in 1950).

The U. S. Civil Service Commission is another great information-gatherer for Uncle Sam. Each year millions of Americans fill out a Federal employment form. This means that, except in the case of a few who would risk penalty of perjury, the answers are given accurately. If you ever applied for a Federal job, in all likelihood Uncle Sam still has the form somewhere.

Much of the information Uncle Sam gathers may seem useless to persons unaware of how it is used. Some of it is useless, after a time. But a lot of it is extremely helpful to those who must keep their fingers on the pulse of the nation's economic and sociological progress. Without accurate information, gathered and collated authoritatively, defense planners would work in a mental fog. Without necessary information, Uncle Sam could not hire the skilled scientists and technicians he needs. Without his knowledge—about *you*—Uncle Sam would never be able to meet the nation's current needs or future problems.

Confronted with the facts about how much the various Federal agencies know about him, the average citizen might well ask: "Can't I have *any* secrets of my own these days?"

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