

For instance, try to stump the computer by asking it how many families with three children under five years of age rent six-room duplexes. If it has been programmed for such a tabulation, it can tell you the answer in an instant. Not actually "tell". Attached to the computer is a high-speed printer that reels off the required statistics at a furious pace.

Since the value of statistics depends on their being up to date, these speedy operations are invaluable for censuses. No longer is it necessary to wait years for some of the more vital pieces of census information to be tabulated, as was once the case. Timely statistics begin to flow soon after the census data have been processed.

Confidentiality Observed

People from other countries who study Canadian census methods frequently comment on the high degree of co-operation of Canadians with the census officials.

This helpfulness is not too surprising. Over the years the census has established thoroughly that it benefits Canadians in many ways. And it has also demonstrated that the answers given are kept in complete confidence.

This statement is included in a letter from Walter E. Duffett, Dominion Statistician, that accompanies census questionnaires:

The census of Canada is taken under the authority of the Statistics Act, which requires everyone to provide the information requested. The same Act guarantees that information you provide about yourself in your census questionnaire will be kept secret and used only to produce statistics. It ensures that no one will know what answers you gave except for DBS employees and they are subject to legal penalties if they disclose personal census information to anyone else.

All permanent and temporary census employees are required to take oaths of secrecy. The penalty for breaking the oath is a fine of up to \$300, a jail sentence of up to six months, or both.

Behind this is the fact that the census is not interested in individuals as persons. It is interested in the facts they supply, but only in order that accurate data from families and individuals can be combined to produce statistics that can be obtained in no other way. Names, addresses and phone numbers are included on the questionnaire so that census field workers can make sure that everyone is included in the census, or can contact individuals in case any information has been missed.

When FOSDIC scans the microfilm of the questionnaires, it can "read" only the filled circles that indicate the answers. Where "write-in" answers are required, these are coded manually so that FOSDIC can read them too. But names are never coded into the information fed into the computer.