

U.S. Asks Free Access to Bank Records

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U.S. Asks Free Access to**Washington**

The administration said yesterday it opposes any restraints on its nearly unlimited power to peek at the spending records of people with bank accounts.

Top law enforcement officials from two government departments said such restrictions would sharply

slow the fight against white-collar and organized crime.

Senator John V. Tunney (Dem-Calif.) said he wants to require federal agents to obtain court permission before they can examine or copy bank records.

Under present law the Internal Revenue Service, the Treasury Department and

other agencies may view such records as long as banks don't object.

At a Senate hearing, Assistant Treasury Secretary Eugene Rossides said there is no danger that the privacy of individual citizens would be jeopardized.

Rossides said proposals by Tunney and Senator Charles

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Mathias (Rep-Md.) "would shield drug traffickers, organized crime figures and white-collar criminals."

Tunney's bill, for which he testified at a Senate Banking committee hearing, would permit examination of bank records when the account holder agrees, when a court subpoena is issued the ac-

count holder or if the government can show in court that there is probable cause to believe a crime has been committed.

Tunney said protection of bank accounts is no different than requiring search warrants when police think they may find evidence in someone's home.

Associated Press