

April 1941 issue

Grant from the Foundation:

\$30,000 to the American Council of  
Learned Societies

A RACE AGAINST THE BOMBERS

The American Council of Learned Societies, which received an appropriation of \$30,000 in January to finance an extensive program of microfilming historical records and other irreplaceable documents in England, reports that the work is progressing rapidly. Nearly a million pages of original papers have been listed for reproduction, and two cameras are now at work in the Public Record Office in London and two others in the British Museum. The films will all be deposited in the Library of Congress in Washington, and arrangements have been made with the American Embassy in London to get them delivered as promptly as possible.

No microfilms have as yet arrived in Washington, and last week Dr. Waldo G. Leland, director of the American Council of Learned Societies, said he was less concerned at present about getting the films delivered here than about getting them made. No one can predict where the next air raid will strike, and the imperative job of the present is to get the documents photographed before disaster makes photography impossible.

The photographic work is being done by an American concern, University Microfilms of Ann Arbor, Michigan, which already had cameras in England working on microfilming projects in Oxford and London.

Operations over there are under the general supervision of Mr. A.J.K. Esdaile, retired secretary of the British Museum, whose intimate knowledge of the documentary treasures of England makes him a most valuable man for this connection. For example, Mr. Esdaile found that a number of wanted documents had been evacuated from London to safer



places of deposit in the country, and was able to persuade the authorities to open these evacuated files for microphotography.

The British are naturally interested in the success of the project, for it provides a safeguard against the complete loss of these records, even though the originals should be destroyed as the treasured books in the Royal College of Physicians Library were recently destroyed.