

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
WASHINGTON

Through a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, the aid extended by the Library of Congress to distant investigators is to be notably improved. As explained by the Librarian yesterday, the grant is to provide at the Library competent apparatus for microfilming and other photoduplicating processes which make possible facsimiles of material (rare books and manuscripts) which can not be lent for use outside of Washington, and which, therefore, could not be issued under the usual system of interlibrary loan.

Through the use of the photostat, and, though in a meagre way, the use of the film, some such service has already been in operation. But, in providing for a really adequate plant representing the latest developments in such apparatus, the Foundation will enable the Library to extend far more widely the benefit of its huge collections, now, in the aggregate, exceeding those elsewhere under any one roof. The advantage of the photostat process over hand-copying lay not merely in economy, but in the production of facsimiles; the advantage of the microfilm over the photostat is that the facsimile produced is not merely less expensive but far more compact and wieldy. For the reading of such film, hand apparatus is available, but there is available also apparatus which will project the text in a dimension legible by the naked eye. Many libraries are already possessed of such projecting apparatus, and very shortly all American Research libraries, as well as many individual investigators, are likely to be. A few such libraries have themselves microfilming apparatus. Others are ambitious to acquire it. In selecting the National Library for this grant, the Foundation had in view the desirability of concentrating its assistance in the institution likely to be subject to the greatest number of serious demands, with collections (not merely within its

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own walls, but otherwise available in Washington) most nearly capable of meeting them, and with an obligation to a national service.

The service cannot, of course, be gratuitous, but, as in the case of photostats heretofore furnished, there will be a small charge covering cost of materials and operation, and receipts from such fees will be applied to reimburse a section of the grant applicable as a revolving fund for the purchase of material and the operating personnel. The service at the Library will be under the direction of Mr. G. A. Schwegmann, Jr., Director of the Library's Union Catalog, in connection with the informational use of which much of the demand for reproduction is experienced. Mr. Schwegmann is now placing orders for the equipment, some of which, incorporating the latest improvements, will have to be made to order.

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