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MINUTES OF THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION

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microphotography

AMERICAN
COUNCIL OF
LEARNED
SOCIETIES -
MICROFILMING

It was, on motion,
RESOLVED that the sum of Thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) be,
RF 41005 and it hereby is, appropriated to the AMERICAN COUNCIL
OF LEARNED SOCIETIES for special microfilming projects
during the period ending July 1, 1942.

The following were the considerations presented:

Humanities

Previous Interest: Through grants of the Foundation to establish microfilming laboratories, work of the nature of that now proposed has been done at the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library, and the University of Chicago.

For the work of the committee on microfilming the Foundation gave a grant in aid of \$2,000 on April 4, 1940.

General Description: The American Council of Learned Societies lately completed a general canvass of the needs of American scholars that could be met through microfilm copies to be deposited at the Library of Congress for loan or for further copying on order. Priorities of need have been recorded by this committee, and other items are constantly being added to the list of desiderata. The present request is primarily for the copying of the indexes of the Public Record Office in London.

The records brought together in the Public Record Office extend over a period of more than 800 years and are equal at least to those of any other country in age and completeness. The access of scholars to these original manuscripts is by printed guides, a general catalogue, and class indexes. The printed guides are two volumes of some 400 pages, each giving the names of source and number of bundles for each classification. The general catalogue goes further by providing the record of official lists, indexes, and other reference resources under different classes. The indexes to materials in the various classifications give the body of proper names and dates essential to the searcher in following his specific inquiry. They are the real resource of scholars at work in the study rooms of the Public Record Office and are available only in that place.

It is imperative that measures now be taken to secure a copy of these indexes for safekeeping, preferably at the Library of Congress. Film copies of the indexes may become for custodians

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of the documents their only source of identification of damaged or dispersed collections. For the scholar in this country, they constitute sources of bibliographical data useful for all historical research in British records; he could later prepare lists for handling the actual documents or for copying on film selected items.

AMERICAN
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(Continued)

Agreement has been secured to have Arundell Esdaile, recently retired Secretary of the British Museum, act as adviser and director of the plan in London; and the Council proposes to enter into a contract with Mr. Eugene B. Power, to produce excellent copy at minimum commercial cost. Mr. Power is a producer of microfilm and planograph material who has for some years had his own machines in the Bodleian, the British Museum, and the Public Record Office; and has executed orders for individuals and libraries such as that of the Law School of the University of Michigan to secure copies of 20,000 legal documents from the Public Record Office. Plans are being made to have the films brought to the United States in care of government officials for deposit in the Library of Congress.

In December Mr. Power secured a priority from the Eastman Company in London for purchase of a high speed automatic machine to be used for the Index project. On January 10, when the purchase had not been completed, the British government requisitioned the machine for its own use, for at least another month. Mr. Power will, therefore, be compelled to use the three slower machines. He has made arrangements for their use solely on this project.

Finances: The proposed grant would provide for the entire cost of this copying. The original estimate of \$15,000 was revised to \$30,000 because of the change in plans made necessary by the temporary loss of the high speed machine.

Future Implications: None.

Comment: The emergency need for action on this particular project is responsible for the form of request. The Council assumes responsibility for recommendations of its committee on micro-filming. It may in time develop larger plans for preservation of scholarly materials in foreign countries and for deposit of film copies in foreign libraries. Both of these facts indicate the need to keep the planning and financing of such international projects within the Council organization, which can deal with requests from libraries and universities, either here or abroad, for its assistance. As in this instance the normal place of deposit in this country will be at the Library of Congress.
