

PROPOSED ACTION

BRITISH
MUSEUM
FILM
LABORATORY

RESOLVED that the sum of Fifty-six thousand dollars (\$56,000), or
RF 47087 as much thereof as may be necessary, be, and it hereby
is, appropriated to the BRITISH MUSEUM toward establish-
ment of a microfilm laboratory, the sum to be available
during the period ending December 31, 1948, and any bal-
ance remaining unexpended at the end of the period to
revert to the Foundation.

CONSIDERATIONS

Humanities: Libraries

Previous Interest: None for this purpose.

General Description: The present proposal is directed toward meet-
ing in part the microfilm needs of the British Museum, and on re-
quest the requirements of other British institutions.

Beginning in 1905 the British Museum stored its great col-
lection of newspapers in two buildings at Hendon. In 1940 the
older building and some of its contents were destroyed by bombing.
Since then the 70,000 volumes of newspapers saved out of the orig-
inal 100,000 volumes have been stored unclassified in the other
building, and all current issues have been accumulated in the same
space. As a result, this unequaled source for studies of British
history is now unavailable for use and conditions are becoming
steadily worse.

To preserve permanently the deteriorating stock and to avoid
continuous expansion of storage space, the trustees of the Museum
now propose to put all British newspapers on microfilm. To ad-
vance the plan the Ministry of Works has agreed to erect at once
a new building to cost approximately \$500,000. The Museum trus-
tees also propose to increase the annual budget for continuous
operations of the laboratory.

The design of the laboratory has been drawn by Mr. Eugene
Power and Mr. Vernon Tate, Librarian of the Massachusetts Insti-
tute of Technology. These specialists in microfilm also have
drawn up the list of necessary equipment and have estimated the
cost of installation. The request to The Rockefeller Foundation

is for funds in dollars to purchase American equipment and to bring the equipment to location for use as promptly as possible. The help of the Foundation will make practicable a plan that is conditioned by the requirement of funds in this country to buy equipment.

BRITISH
MUSEUM
FILM
LABORATORY
(Continued)

Finances: The requirements of the plan call for expenditures by December 31, 1948, approximately as follows:

Equipment	\$44,068
Supplies	1,905
Advisory services and contingent fund	<u>10,027</u>
	\$56,000

Future Implications: None.

*see
200R
ACLs
Microphotography*

*see 401R
ASLIB
Microphotography*

Comment: During the war the Foundation assisted, through the American Council of Learned Societies and otherwise, with expenses of preservation of materials and distribution of scientific material through microphotographing means. A major project involved an expenditure of over \$100,000 to make two film copies of rare books and manuscripts. One of the two collections is now in the Library of Congress and is available for use by all scholars. A second project was developed by the Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux for rapid reproduction and distribution of scientific journals and other material needed for war research. A large part of other non-commercial film work in Britain has been on commission to Mr. Eugene Power of Ann Arbor, Michigan. He has cameras on location at the British Museum, University of Oxford, the Public Record Office, and Cambridge University.

*see
401A
Royal Society of
Medicine
Medical Library*

Great Britain has one important international film service, at present in operation under the administration of the Royal Society of Medicine. The work began in 1942, when the Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux loaned its film equipment at the end of its intensive war program. More recently the Royal Society has enlarged the scope of its service under a current grant of Medical Sciences. During the year ending July 17, 1947, the Society made film copies of nearly half a million pages of print. In order to make the material immediately useful, it has also distributed 88 readers in 11 countries.

By comparison, the project of the British Museum will give security and economy in the handling of its own stock of newspapers, will make prints available as requested, and will open the way for other essential services to international scholarship.