

Luncheon  
INTERVIEWS:  
JHW

BBE	10/29	RBF
ME	10/29-5	in 2
AB	10/31	AB
FTS	11/1	add
JMP	NOV-3-45	ME

October 25, 1945

RBF and Winfield Riefler - Atomic Energy

RBF, WR and JHW had lunch together yesterday. WR is, as all of us are, deeply under the concern of the discovery of atomic energy. He feels that a study should immediately be set under way of the problems involved and methods of decentralization of our cities. He wishes to assemble a staff at Princeton (not under the Institute for Advanced Study) in order to undertake the task. One member whom he has in mind is Louis Dembitz (nephew of Justice Brandeis), now with the Federal Reserve Board and formerly with WR during his tour of duty as minister in charge of economic matters in the American Embassy in London. He has another staff member whom he would like to add. In answer to question he would not indicate total amount of funds needed but said it would be substantial.

When RBF asked whether this was not defeatism, and equivalent to saying that the hope of successful issue at the political and international front was dead, JHW asked whether Russia would not interpret such a study as evidence that "we were stripping for action." Both raised the question as to whether the prospective developments in the atomic energy field as applied to military operations did not mean that even decentralization would not solve the problem, since the power of destruction could pursue the target wherever it was located.

RBF raised questions about the problem of decentralizing New York. To these questions WR seemed to offer no convincing answer.

JHW feels that the real problem is a problem of personal, psychological reconversion and would like to consider from that point of view. JHW discussed the issue last night with W. J. Carson, a warm friend of WR's, who expressed the feeling that this line was not a satisfactory issue of WR's efforts at scholarly readjustment.

Ralph Young will discuss the matter with JHW this afternoon at 2:30.

JHW

JHW:DAA

2005  
SSRC

Atomic energy