

# Social Science Research Council

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SSRC  
Commission of Inquiry

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September 26, 1933

Recd  
E.E.D.

Dr. E. E. Day,  
Rockefeller Foundation,  
49 West 49 Street,  
New York City.

Dear Dr. Day:

I am instructed to present to the Rockefeller Foundation, in behalf of the Social Science Research Council, a request for a grant in the amount of \$172,500 for the support of commissions of inquiry on three urgent public questions. Attached are memoranda outlining briefly the purpose and procedure proposed for commission inquiries on the place of a controlled national economy in an international system, population redistribution, and public service personnel. Budget estimates are included with these memoranda.

Much can be done through commissions of inquiry to focus attention on crucial public issues and to clarify opinion by assembling in useful form such data, beliefs, generalizations and perspective as are currently available. Various procedures such as public hearings and the assembling of available materials by competent staff members are to be employed. The aim would be not only to provide straightforward presentations of fact and interpretation from all possible sources so that issues would be sharply joined, but also to do so in such a manner that serious national attention would be secured. It is believed that results can be obtained comparable to those of the Royal Commissions in Great Britain, as contrasted with the relatively undigested and ineffective products of Congressional investigative committees in this country.

The Council has adequate lists of suitable personnel from which members and staff of the three commissions here proposed might be chosen. It is impossible, of course, to make definite arrangements with individuals before financial support has been assured. Consequently, since the Council might find an insufficient number of suitable persons actually available for any one of the three suggested commissions, the privilege of substituting another urgent public question for any one of those outlined in the attached memoranda would be appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Robert T. Crane

RTC:JM

## AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL POLICY

Trend. -- As a part of the industrial recovery program, the international economic and other relations of the United States have been subordinated to a domestic program, temporarily or otherwise. Under laissez-faire conceptions which have dominated economic thought, virtual free trade has been held up as the desirable goal by theorists, while business and governments have brought about an increasing number and variety of trade barriers. ( This tendency has been enhanced by the depression. The theory has been called internationalism and the practice economic nationalism. )

It is possible that a theory of internationalism which leads in practice to intensified nationalism is sterile, that it overlooks essential promises. Can theory be revised and the controversy be restated (in such terms that we shall have) a better guide to policy than an ineffective principle on one side and an unguided practice on the other?

Problem. -- What are the objectives to be attained in any international policy, economic or otherwise?

How are the political, economic, cultural or other objectives related? How far may these objectives be reconciled, or in what respects are they inconsistent?

What is the meaning of economic dependence or independence, internationally or regionally? What are the theoretical and practical limits of dependence, independence, and cooperation for the United States?

What groups or interests are affected by alternative programs of inter-regional or national tariffs, trade, loans, currency, etc., and what is the public responsibility for their position?

What changes are made if we abandon laissez-faire assumptions both nationally and internationally? What are the international requirements of a planned economy? Is there essential conflict between national planning and international planning? How, specifically, can a planned economy in the United States fit into a world economy?

## REDISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION

Situation.-- Population is as a matter of fact being redistributed and there are numerous proposals for guiding that redistribution. These proposals differ widely, and are in certain cases mutually contradictory. The Federal Government is undertaking, on a considerable scale, the extent of which is still undetermined, a redistribution of population as a matter of deliberate policy.

It is providing resources which may be used for modifying certain environmental conditions, both urban, rural, and urban-rural. City planners, state and housing planners are confronted by a similar problem, as in the metropolitan region in the sub-marginal agricultural areas, and in coal mining and other industrial regions.

Problems.--What are the objectives that control a program of population redistribution?

How does the environment, urban, rural, rural-urban, contribute to these objectives, and how are these objectives interrelated?

What modifications of environment are subject to conscious control. What are the limitations, legal, economic, political, personal, customary, to modifications of rural or urban environment, and to the moving of individuals or groups?

What are the chief programs for environmental modification, what data are essential or important for public decision regarding policy?

What basic issues emerge, and what alternatives seem most feasible, in the light of one objective or plan or another?

## PUBLIC SERVICE PERSONNEL

Trend.—The expansion of governmental activity in the United States, both as a result of technical development in various services, and as a result of the industrial situation, makes imperative a reconsideration of the whole problem of public personnel in the United States, with a view to reorganization and improvement of civil service, national, state and local, and to a reorientation of public attitudes with regard to this service.

Problem.—What type of personnel does the new order require?

How should such personnel be recruited, trained, disciplined?

How should the public personnel problem be related to the private personnel policy, if at all, with special reference to wages, working conditions, tenure, interchange?

What considerations of motivation, compensation, working conditions, security, promotion, discipline, retirement, are relevant?

How should such a program and policy be implemented administratively on the federal, state and local levels?

What provision, if any, should be made for the interchange of personnel, between various units of governmental service?

What means are best adapted to stimulating public interest in and maintaining a critical-constructive attitude toward public personnel problems?



## BUDGET

It is estimated that the amount of \$57,500 is required for each of the three studies outlined.

### Details of Estimates.

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| Secretary . . . . .                     | \$10,000     |
| Stipends for members of Commissions . . | 12,000       |
| Office . . . . .                        | 16,500       |
| Travel . . . . .                        | 7,000        |
| Printing & office expense . . . . .     | 3,000        |
| Contingent . . . . .                    | <u>9,000</u> |
| TOTAL                                   | \$57,500     |