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(General)

STAFF CONFERENCE

Tuesday, September 5, 1939

Present: RBF, TBA, AG, JD, ARM, SM, RJH, WAS, HM, GKS, RAL, GJB, WWB, ER,  
WW, FBH, JAF.

RBF Reports on latest word from the Paris Office. Cable address now Rockfound, La Baule (later Rockefeller Foundation, La Baule), the registry of this address to be checked with the cable office here. Before taking up immediate practical questions, reports tentative ideas concerning policy. These have been mostly negative. Hopes RF will not undertake relief. In broad terms, our job is to conserve intellectual life, just how is not yet evident. Must live on opportunistic basis. Question of relief a matter for the Trustees to decide. As a Trustee, is against the assumption of responsibility on a large scale for relief work so far as Europe is concerned, would see possibility of new undertakings for IHD and MS. Not at all sure that research can be carried on in the present mood. Doubts openings for H, SS or NS. Work may be concentrated largely in USA, and there is the possibility of work in South America.

Practical questions will come from day to day on fellowships and grants now running in Europe. Asks comments from those present.

AG Suggests the necessity of thinking what the Foundation is going to do when and if America gets in the war, and when and if the end of the war comes. The Foundation's most effective work will be in reconstruction. Would like not to use up resources while war is on. Must keep in mind what will happen to work and personnel here if US goes into the war. Believes our major mistakes will be the things that we do not think of.

WAS Believes the IHD program would be definitely decreased in Europe. How far that will affect Asia Minor, does not know. Can use personnel and money in the US and South America. There are directions in which we could develop in South America quite plainly - the Argentine, Chili, and the Pacific coast states might be developed with headquarters at Buenos Aires and strong men in charge. Thinks staff should be got out of Europe, Roumania and Turkey.

RBF Has a feeling that the Trustees would underscore emphatically the necessity for elasticity in program. Impossible for any division to keep rigidly to a given line. Complete elasticity should be the rule of the day.

WW Has one observation: There is not much to be done in the NS in Europe but believes we should survey as promptly and realistically as possible what should be our work in Europe. For the NS the RF has an opportunity for showing as much stability of values as we can.

RBF States his observation at the time of the World War of the dislocation which comes in public thinking and private life. Every proposal of the RF must mean something and promise something. Some of the things we have been doing cannot be well carried on in the state of public opinion which will soon obtain.

AG One further thing occurs to him. Awfully useful in so far as we can to have such persons as would be willing to do so at luncheon setting forth different points of view so that the RF officers may be as well informed from as wide sources as possible.

JAF Recalls the situation as it developed in the corresponding period in the World War. After discussion as to what should be the attitude of the RF the question was put up to government officials. General Gorgas responded that there were a number of essential services which could be rendered by a private organization having international contact and a confidence well established; and that the most useful service of the RF would be to remain intact and to render such incidental services as might be possible while carrying out previously planned program.

WAS It may be observed in this connection that the last influenza pandemic occurred in connection with the World War. We must get ahead as fast as possible with our work in that field. Our knowledge is constantly being added to and within a few years will become useful knowledge.

WW Suggests Karl Compton as a speaker or Frank Jewett.

#### Fellowships

FBH Describes the typical problems with which he had been dealing as of this date.

With discussion, the following conclusions were reached: That for the present there shall be no more American fellows chosen to go to Europe.

That for the present there shall be no more fellows chosen from Europe.

Fellows already here, and American fellows in Europe are to use their discretion as to the time of their return, but are to be advised to go when that is possible.

~~Fellowships are to be extended for fellows who cannot return to their place of origin.~~

Individual problems will be dealt with by divisions and TBA.

RBF Appropriations and grants in aid in Europe. Asks the Comptroller to furnish each division at the earliest possible moment with a list of current grants.

There can be no general rule, but the Directors should have specific idea of how outstanding grants can be handled.

ER    Raises question of the sterling in London deposited for the Bodleian and the British Museum. This matter cannot be profitably taken up now.

RBF    Paris Office. La Baule is not going to be serviceable to continue indefinitely as European office. It is a temporary measure and the staff must later be brought home or possibly scattered, decentralizing administration of work at possible areas.