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Program & Policy

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

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FROM: AG

DATE: November 29, 1937

TO:

COMMENTS:

RBF		R137

SUBJECT: Opportunities outside the large universities

On the question of able minds whose work the Foundation is able to aid and who would probably have been neglected by the great universities there are the following remarks to be made.

Science itself is moving and changing, new opportunities present themselves and in many instances these new opportunities are better recognized by foundations than by universities themselves. Suggestions come from men in universities but usually university credits are frozen, and extremely little money is available for new enterprises. If large funds were to be turned over to universities, it would be a matter of a very short time before the freedom of manoeuvre would be consumed by recurrent demands of existing servides. Furthermore it has been the experience of officers again and again that they have been asked by presidents and committees in universities for information regarding able individuals elsewhere in the country or in the world. There is a certain falsity in regarding university centers as "centers". How can a university center be defined without reference to its periphery, i. e. the smaller colleges and universities which contribute to it? Recruitment of personnel which disregards the periphery deserves the term "inbreeding." Some smaller institutions must be of rela-

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tive good quality and in relatively fair numbers. Furthermore the officers have found in some of the large universities a willingness that amounts to desire to have the foundations step in in their own capacity to give extra aid to especially able individuals. There is, furthermore, the fact that a number of the Foundation's activities are not connected with universities and in such activities the university is not the proper organization.

Citing illustrations of the above points:

Dartmouth College asked for aid to Ames in physiological optics, which could not have been obtained from its ordinary budget.

Harry Murray at Harvard represents a development in psychology which would not have taken place at the instance of the present Department of Psychology there.

Brumpt in parasitology in Paris is a far better man in his field than the University of Paris recognizes financially.

The development of Mayo's work in industrial psychology at Harvard would have been impossible without Foundation aid. The Harvard School of Business Administration has become completely converted from an attitude of indifference to one of lively concern.

Ranson at Northwestern is doing work better than that university has recognized, and the same is true of Wolff at Cornell Medical.

The Foundation's activity in the development of sex research through the National Research Council, in schools of public health and in the London School of Tropical Medicine did not come at the instance of universities as such but on the initiative virtually of the Foundation. The same may be said in considerable measure of the improvement in medical education in the United States.

As examples of able individuals not within important institutions are:

Granit in physiology at Helsingfors
Szent-Gyorgyi at Szeged - Nobel prize winner
Ebaugh in psychiatry at the University of Colorado.

It may be further noted that it is not accurate to assume that all able youngsters will turn up in large and rich institutions, nor will necessarily be able to nor inclined to resort thereto.

Of the non-university activities where the Foundation is able to do research work which would not be done by a university could be cited Leonard Colebrook's work at Queen Charlotte's Hospital, Goldstein's work at Montefiore Hospital, R. A. Fisher at the Galton Institute, Penrose at

Colchester, the National Research Committee on Drug Addiction, Dayton's work in Massachusetts State Department of Mental Diseases, National Committee for Mental Hygiene, and Lorente de No at the Central Institute for the Deaf at St. Louis.

In ordinary times the university budgets leave extremely narrow margin for new formulations and new developments, especially in regard to research work. Individuals in the universities are conscious of this immobilization. It is one of the principal services of the Foundation to provide funds wherewith advances can be made, and it is extremely important furthermore that great ability existing outside the knowledge of faculties of universities be recognized and freed to do valuable work.