

Internal Memorandum

January 20, 1954

Benjamin Strong

The Strong files in the Federal Reserve Bank of New York occupy five (5) file drawers in the regular consolidated files room on the 7th floor. They are under the care of Cora Dilistin, Chief. The first three (3) drawers are classified according to the names of men with whom Mr. Strong was corresponding. There are perhaps 75 headings in all. One drawer contains Mr. Strong's diaries and red folders of his correspondence with Mr. Montague Norman for the years 1922 to 1928. The fifth drawer contains his observations on foreign trips.

There is correspondence of Governor Strong to and from the following: officers of the bank, Messrs. Case, Curtis, Harrison, Jay, Kenzel, S. Morgan, Snyder and Treman; members of the Federal Reserve Board, Messrs. Delano, Hamlin, Harding, Miller and Warburg; various Secretaries and Under Secretaries of the Treasury, Messrs. Gilbert, Glass, Leffingwell, McAdoo, and Winston; and several economists of the time, Messrs. Bullock, ~~Kyemmerer~~, Sprague and Withers.

There are several files on such subjects as the Budget System Commission, the Cotton Loan Fund 1914-16, the Monetary Commission 1911-14, International Chamber of Commerce 1921-28, the Unemployment Conference 1921-22 and the Joint Commission of Agricultural Inquiry - U. S. Congress.

There are also copies of Governor Strong's addresses, as well as files of inter-office memoranda which he sent to the officers during the years.

There is also correspondence with important officials of foreign countries, viz: Sir Basil P. Blackett and W. M. Bailey of India; Sir George Paish, Georges Pallain of the Bank of France; Dr. Schacht of the Reichsbank; E. Fukai and J. Inouye of the Bank of Japan; S. Imanura of the Sumitomo Bank; and Lord Cunliff, Sir Brian Cokayne and Montague Norman of the Bank of England.

Governor Strong made trips to Europe in 1916, 1919, 1925, 1926, and

1928. In each case there is a file of correspondence and a diary or journal which he wrote covering his various impressions and conferences. In 1920 he visited Japan, India and Java. A reception was given him in Japan. A copy of Governor Inouye's speech is here as well as one written in longhand in English, and also in Japanese, which Governor Strong gave in Japan.

There is a file on Reparations containing correspondence with Messrs. Gilbert, Jay, Leffingwell, Jas. A. Logan, Jr. and McCarrah.

There are many letters in this collection written in longhand. Copies of some of the typewritten ones are scattered through the bank files under the various subject headings but this is the only place where Governor Strong's correspondence with any particular individual is grouped together.

In addition to this material there is said to be Pre Federal Reserve Bank information assembled in preparation of speech delivered at Bankers Convention, New Orleans 1911. This was given to Mr. Burgess.

The material in these five (5) drawers came from the so called personal files of Mr. Strong. The Governor believed firmly in central filing. He was active in the process of setting up the present system, a task done under the supervision of Miss Mary Packer, now retired and living in Philadelphia. Over the course of the years the great bulk of his work went into the central files. The exception was a personal file kept in his office.

Information from Mr. Benjamin Strong Jr. and Miss Dilistin indicates that after his death his papers were separated into two groups; those which had to do with bank affairs and those which were personal. The former group is that now contained in the five drawers described above. The later ^{group} of papers concerned with personal matters (some of them said by Mr. Strong Jr. to be marginal and sometimes touching on phases of bank work) ^{were} sent to the Strong home. After that was ^{done} ~~sold~~ Mr. Benjamin Strong Jr. again went through them and destroyed those of a ~~highly~~ personal and intimate nature. The remaining papers are now in the Lincoln Storage Warehouse in New York. It is

probable that there may be among them data bearing on bank affairs, but Mr. Strong Jr. thinks there would not be very much.

In addition to this segregated material there is in the bank files a vast amount of Strong's memoranda scattered through the entire filing system. The banks files are set up on the Dewey decimal system which depends on a classification more frequently used in Libraries than in filing systems. Mr. Strong's papers will therefore be found under all the subject headings with which he dealt that is; discount rate, expenses, victory loans, branch banking and all the rest of the bank's business.

An early file on the Federal Reserve Act itself (classification No. 010) contains valuable early material on policy matters differences of opinion within banking circles, memoranda, and so forth. This same thing would be true of a number of subjects. There is, for example, in the early file under the heading 010 a letter of August 9, 1915 written by Governor Strong in which he looks ahead to the possibility that the United States might enter the war and comments on the strain on the then young Federal Reserve System which would result.

Anyone desiring to work on the Strong files would have to cover not only the five file drawers and possibly the material in the Lincoln Storage Warehouse, but should also be prepared to seek permission to dealve into regular files under subject headings with which Mr. Strong was known to be dealing. It is probable that leads to the latter would be found by going through the file drawers, but clearly that in itself would not be sufficient. The very stuff of creation both for the New York Bank and the system lives within these files.

There may also be in Princeton material which is relevant. Mr. Strong was active in establishing the International Finance Section of the Economics Department at Princeton University. There he deposited a collection of World War I material including clippings from four (4) New York newspapers

from the war's start to its end. He sent the Librarian, Mr. Gerould around the world to get material. This material should certainly be looked into as there may be in the Princeton Library material which bears on the development of International Relations in this field.

NOTES

Where is Mr. Beyer formerly secretary to Governor Strong?

In the Confidential File is a memorandum containing information as to what has happened to files Mr. Strong brought with him to this Bank in 1914. Some of these were destroyed but a few may still be in the material which Mr. Benjamin Strong, Jr. has in a storage warehouse. Others may be in the Princeton collection. These seem to have included war pamphlets and detail about the gold pool of the summer of 1914.