

March 4, 1954

Internal Memorandum

National Records Management Council

Interview with Mr. Robert A. Shiff, Executive Director

It will be remembered that Professor Arthur Cole of the library at Harvard gave me the name of the National Records Management Council. Dr. Cole said that he was suggesting their use in all business histories.

An article in Fortune magazine of February, 1953, describes the work of the Council in reducing the size of records and installing co-ordinated filing and an archive system. Mr. Shiff says that the Council was used by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York in reorganizing the storage files in the annex. Mr. Robert Kibbler, Archivist, in charge of the storage file section was trained by the Council.

From what Professor Cole had said it sounded as though the Council may be useful in classifying and indexing collections of paper this project is uncovering. They are at the present engaged in handling the papers of the Rockefeller family. This information is confidential.

Mr. Shiff said that the Council will be glad to organize papers and to recommend their final place of deposit. He could not give any estimate of what the costs might be or how long such a task could take. Obviously both things depend, to a certain extent, on the size of collections and the condition of papers. He would, however, be willing to send someone to look over the collection and then make an estimate.

At the present, the work of organizing in such a collection as, for instance, those in the Library of Congress, is in many instances left to the library which always has more work than it can perform speedily. We have discussed the plan of subsidizing the Library of Congress in certain cases in the hope that the setting in order of papers can be done more quickly. Such techniques as they are developing might speed up the work of organizing,

but, it would have to be paid for either by a foundation or by this Committee.

Mr. Shiff said that the Council was started with Rockefeller funds but they are now self-supporting. Because they are interested in the problem of family papers, he will be willing to set up a pilot project (as for instance, with Parker Willis papers) and work out techniques for handling a small family collection.

This sounds like a good idea. He will try to get more light on the reputation which this Council has.

MA:tm