

April 6, 1955

Internal Memorandum

The Hoover Library

The collection of Hoover papers, including those which concern his Presidency, are located in the library at Stanford University, which is in Palo Alto, a town about 35 miles south of San Francisco.

The library has been for some years in the charge of Mr. Harold H. Fisher, a well-known historian, who has worked with Mr. Hoover in earlier phases of his career. Mr. Fisher, owing to some internal disagreements, has been made chairman of the board of the library and will resign within a few years. The acting head is now his former assistant, Mr. Easton Rothwell. These two men, together with ^{Beswick} ~~Helen~~ Miller who is Mr. Hoover's secretary in New York, are the ones from whom information can most usefully be obtained. I talked with both Mr. Rothwell and Mr. Fisher.

The reason why we received such curious lack of cooperation when we wrote earlier to the Stanford Library to find out about Mr. Hoover's papers is apparently that the archivist who was in charge of those papers died about three years ago. An assistant archivist, whom she had trained, then took her place.

The former was a Miss Dane, the latter a Miss Nichol. The death of Miss Nichol left the Hoover archives without any head. Mr. Hoover then decreed that the collection should be completely sealed, including the index, until a new archivist was appointed and given a chance to become thoroughly familiar with the papers. Negotiations are now going on, in New York, Washington and California, in an effort to find a person who is a trained and competent archivist, agreeable to the authorities of Stanford University, and acceptable to Mr. Hoover.

The situation is complicated by the fact that the aura of adoration which surrounded Mr. Hoover when he came back from World War I as the successful savior of the Belgian people and the administrator of Belgian relief still clings in the minds of certain people who work very closely to him. The obverse of this medal is an arbitrary and grudging attitude reported on the part of Mr. Hoover himself, whom most people can approach

only by means of his strained and faithful secretary. Apparently the dying ^{grip} of a long authoritarian attitude hampers work here.

It is always possible that a scholar going with the authority of this Committee might reach Mr. Hoover and get permission to use the archives. If the process of ^{getting} a new archivist, who must be selected and trained, is a necessary barrier, there will be at least another year before anyone can work here.

The collection of Presidential papers is said to be in the same shape in which it came from the White House. In other words, it is in folders arranged in file cabinets and set up both chronologically and by subject. The former archivist is said to have been working to coordinate the vast bulk of papers through a subject index, but apparently this did not get very far. It is said that the existing index is not in such shape as to be particularly useful and that anyone choosing to work on Federal Reserve material should be able to go direct to the papers themselves. Thus, they would work within an office arrangement of papers, looking for those filed under Federal Reserve, under Treasury, and under allied departments which might have been concerned.

Very few people have worked on these papers. Mr. Edgar E. Robinson, who recently wrote a book on Roosevelt, ^(The Roosevelt Leadership, 1933-45) may have consulted the Hoover archives. If so, citations would have been carefully noted.

The lobby of the library building has on display a page, as Mr. Hoover wrote it, as it was reproduced in typescript and corrected by him, and as it was reproduced in galley and again corrected by him. This, by chance, concerns paragraphs on the growing economic crisis of the 1930's, which would be included in that volume of his three-volume memoirs which concern the period. It is worth consulting.

A Mr. Kemp worked with Mr. Hoover on these memoirs. The then-archivist is said to have been much concerned because material as Mr. Hoover remembered and wrote it was not adequately rechecked in the archives themselves.

Mr. Harold H. Fisher will let us know when and if a new archivist is appointed. Meanwhile relations have been established with Mr. Fisher and Mr. Rothwell which are sufficiently friendly, so that further requests for information would probably evoke more complete replies than did the earlier letter.

MA:IB