

June 11, 1955

Internal Memorandum

Interview with Dr. Herbert Heaton, Professor of Economic History at the University of Minnesota

I went out to see Dr. Heaton on a Saturday morning at his home in Minneapolis and found him a charming Yorkshireman with a delightful sense of humor and a wide knowledge of both economics and history. Were he a little younger, he might prove to be the ideal person to do this work, although I have not yet read his books. I discussed the whole project with him in detail and then asked for any suggestions of people he might have for our purposes.

Dr. Heaton confirmed what we have already found, namely that the field is a rather arid one in the realm where history and economics meet. He himself had been on the committee which set up the economic history group with which Professor Arthur Cole of Harvard works. He agreed with Dr. Stewart that that had rather worked itself out, though he said that the Hidy's were doing good work in their chosen field. They are to spend this summer in Minneapolis working on the Weyerhaeuser Lumber business.

Dr. Heaton said that John Langum was a brilliant student in the Harvard Business School. He had a minor in economic history and a fine historical sense.

He suggested that we talk to Ray Whittlesey of the Wharton School who is interested in banking history. He thought that Whittlesey might have useful recommendations and called him one of the best insofar as historical interests in economic matters are concerned.

He spoke of Herman Kruse of New York University as someone who wrote well on financial history. He said that Mr. Kruse had energy, capacity and ability to handle material, but he seemed to think that he was lacking in tact, and he was not quite sure what he might do with an assignment in this project.

A young man named Robert Jost, now at Minnesota doing a doctor's thesis on the Chatfield Bank, may be a possibility later on in the project, depending on what

he makes of the Chatfield Bank. It is a small bank in Minnesota which, for some fortunate reason, has kept all its records and is making a very interesting study.

At the University of Wisconsin Dr. Heaton said that Rondo Cameron was working on the Credit Mobilier in Paris and was worth watching. This again is a matter of seeing what he turns out.

He said that Rostow at M.I.T., who has been devoting himself to business cycles, would ask the right questions of the material. Rostow has a quick mind and the right range of interests for this project. Oxford and Cambridge had both invited him for next year. His research expert is Mrs. Schwartz. His brother is Dean of the Law School at Yale. In Dr. Heaton's opinion, Mr. Rostow ought certainly to be explored.

Dr. Heaton says that Arthur Marget is someone he has known in the past as being brilliant on history or theory. He did not know that Mr. Marget had now gone to the Board and wondered if this might rule him out so far as the international sphere is concerned.

He also spoke of Frank A. Knox, who got his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago and now writes reviews in the Canadian Journal of Economic and Political Science. Mr. Knox has not published much, but he is worth watching in Dr. Heaton's opinion.

Dr. Heaton promised to keep the project in mind. He will talk with his associates about it and will send us any other suggestions which come up in the course of his work at the University of Minnesota.

We explored the things which he himself was doing, and he said that he had just turned 65 and did not believe that one should take on these big projects after that age. I had the feeling that he might, however, be interested in the project sufficiently so that he would take a piece of it. I had no authority to discuss it with him at that time, but I think this is worth considering. As a beginning, it might be worthwhile to read his "Economic History of Europe."

MA:IB