

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
BUREAU OF THE BUDGET
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

October 31, 1950

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILE

SUBJECT: Conversation with Messrs. James C. O'Brien and Harold Goldstein, concerning scientific manpower

Messrs. O'Brien and Goldstein, both of the Office of Education, Federal Security Agency, called on me on October 31, to tell me of their work on scientific manpower cataloging. They had been referred to me, they said, by Mr. Mills of the Division of Statistical Standards of the Bureau of the Budget. Mr. O'Brien is an employee of the NSRB and Mr. Goldstein is on loan from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Mr. O'Brien was in charge of the National Roster of Scientific Manpower during World War II. He told me that at its peak the Roster had some 350,000 names.

The National Scientific Register, which is currently being worked on at the Office of Education, FSA, with Mr. Goldstein apparently in charge, is being financed by the NSRB as an interim emergency measure. Its concept is somewhat more restricted than that of the National Roster, and it looks toward a total of about 150,000 names in the physical and biological sciences, and with some engineering names.

They seemed to have no disagreement with the conception that the National Science Foundation, when it gets into operation, will take over this work.

It is striking to me how many different individuals and agencies are doing some sort of work having to do with scientific manpower, and it should be a very good thing when the NSF can consolidate these activities* and give them intelligent central guidance.

** as to cataloging etc.*

There seem to be two somewhat distinct problems. One is the cataloging of individual names, addresses and qualifications for use as a sort of employment agency source. In this field many fragments exist, including the Government work referred to above, and in which perhaps the most reliable fragments consist of various specialized directories such as American Men of Science (52,000 names of PhD and equiv. status) and some directories of engineers which, if I heard correctly, list some 50,000 or more individuals.

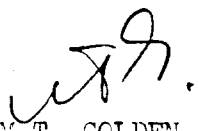
(52,000 names of PhD and equiv. status)

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The other aspect is statistical in nature rather than being concerned with individual names. This kind of data concerning which Dr. Trytten, of the National Research Council, appears to be by far the best qualified source, requires quite different techniques and judgment to assemble. It is my impression that very useful data concerning the numbers of scientifically and technically qualified individuals, tabulated by field of specialization, by degree of competence or experience, etc., could be assembled and/or estimated--with reasonable correctness as to order of magnitude--by a group headed by Dr. Trytten, for example. It would be well to have such data prepared as promptly as possible for general guidance as to program feasibility and the like. Trytten is getting some data together for Dr. Compton's current quickie survey for RDB.

O'Brien and Goldstein left with me a memorandum dated October 13, 1950 from O'Brien to Mr. Robert L. Clark, Chief of the Manpower Division of NSRB, describing in some detail the program they envisage for compiling the National Scientific Register and they also left with me a sample of questionnaire form to be sent to individuals for inclusion in the Register. It is a formidable questionnaire.

WTG/vc


WILLIAM T. GOLDEN