

POLICY

Administration

✓ EAGLETON, CLYDE A.

Biography

AYDELOTTE, F.

I.A.S.

Academic Standards

Clyde Eagleton (New York Univ., Washington Square, N.Y.) to Aydelotte (Swarthmore)

"...

"Being at Princeton yesterday reminded me that it is to be your scene of activity. I had hoped to talk to you about that when ~~wrote to you~~ I was at Swarthmore, but you were away and I believe that I have never written you. I am pleased that you are to direct the Institute because I have been rather disappointed in it and can now hope that something constructive will be done there. (That compliment, sir, was no slip!) Aside from mathematics, which has possibly been overdone (comparatively, certainly), the Institute seems to have done little. I have been particularly disappointed in the social science field and unable to understand why even the few men working in that field were of no higher calibre. (I think Earle is all right).

"...

"And study in this field leads into many problems of democratic government-- which I think is at a much more critical stage than most people realize. We shall have to participate in international affairs more and more. How can we do so effectively with our present system? In the Republican Program in this morning's paper I find the statement that our foreign policy should be flexible enough so that 'we can adopt the measures that will, at any given time, most effectively serve both of these purposes.' How can a democratic system do this? For example, suppose we wish to contribute something to the peace settlement (which won't be much good unless we do). How can our government find out in advance what the people want to contribute so that the government can safely offer it? This is Stanley Hornbeck's problem. We don't want to upset the world again by reneging on the peace treaty after it is made. How can we, in time to do any good, teach the people what we as a nation ought to do when a new situation appears? How, even, can we find out what the people want, when they know? Or, does democracy really mean that we must wait for the people to decide? I speak of the international situation only; the internal problems are also grave. We talk about responsibility of the government in a democracy, but we have never investigated the responsibility of the individual in a democracy.

"...

"I understand that the Institute has three men in Economics, all engaged in the same kind of work; one in History and none in Political Science, much less in international affairs. I hear, too, that the History man does not even know what the Economics men are doing; yet I should think the Institute would offer a rare opportunity for coordinated attack on a problem from various angles."

...

File II-15

1940

3/23
3/30
4/8

GEST LIBRARY

Facilities

BRITTON, ROSWELL

Biography

✓ EAGLETON, CLYDE

Clyde Eagleton (New York Univ.) to F. Aydelotte (Swarthmore) 3/23/40

"...

"For your information, and as my good deed for the day, I pass along a conversation I had the other day with a fellow at N.Y.U. named Roswell Britton. He is supposed to be a pretty good sinologue or sinologist or whatever they are called--Moe would know about that end of it better than I. At present, Britton is living a frustrated sort of a life teaching Mathematics at N.Y.U. because there are no jobs for scholars of ancient Chinese. He says that in connection with the Gest Library at the Institute, Flexner invited him to apply for membership, and that with Flexner's withdrawal he was left up in the air. He does not seem to be aggrieved or to feel that any promises were broken; he just had some hopes which are now suspended. If there are any opportunities in that field I think he would deserve consideration."

Aydelotte (Princeton or Swarthmore) to Eagleton (New York Univ.) Mar. 30, 1940

"...

"I talked Roswell Britton's case over with Dr. Flexner and got a somewhat different impression of the situation. Dr. Flexner feels, in the first place, that Britton is not a specialist in Chinese studies, but rather an amateur who has an interest in the subject but no scholarly credentials anything like up to the standard which we require here at the Institute. I understand from Dr. Flexner that there was absolutely no commitment of any sort on the part of the Institute. If we are able to develop Oriental studies here, it may be that Britton would find it a useful place to work, but if we go into that subject we ought, in accordance with our program, to get men who either are or promise to be leading scholars in the world in that field."

Eagleton (NYU) to Aydelotte (Princeton) Apr. 8, 1940

"...

"I am afraid I left the wrong impression as to Britton. He does not feel any claim as against the Institute--he merely had a vague hope; nor, I think, does he aspire to be one of the big men, but merely to assist. On the other hand, I had the impression that he is a promising young Sinologist--you probably know more about that through the Guggenheim Foundation. On still another hand, I don't see why the Institute should spend its money (unless there is plenty) on such work as this, as there are far more important studies that need to be made.

"..."

File II-15