

Preface

I understand the specifications for this memorandum, prepared at the invitation of Doctor Eleanor Bernert Sheldon of the Russell Sage Foundation, as follows. It should suggest an orientation and line of action for foundation executives, administrators of research grant programs, directors of research organizations, and others concerned with making contemporary social science more useful for the function of social reporting. That function itself is becoming more widely appreciated as one that is essential to an enlightened practice of government. It was not part of my task, however, to consider how it should be instituted or carried on within the apparatus of government. Nor did I see the purpose of the memorandum as that of appraising current theoretical issues in the study of social change.

If, with its limited scope, the memorandum serves to stimulate useful action that is clearly within our capability to take, I will be more than satisfied. The reader will quickly discern that the proposal advanced here is, in regard to its intellectual content, a simple and indeed obvious one. If we are not ready to take the obvious step, we had best be done with arguing about the subtle ones.

O.D.D.

ANN ARBOR

OCTOBER, 1969