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Keeney Views Aims Of Humanities Body

By LEROY F. AARONS
Special to The Journal-Bulletin

Washington — Ivory tower scholars will have little to gain from the new National Council on the Humanities, the council's chairman said yesterday.

Dr. Barnaby C. Keeney, retiring president of Brown University, said in a press conference and a speech to the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States that congressional intent in providing funds for the humanities was that the resulting programs should be "for the public welfare and in the national interest."

With Dr. Keeney at the press meeting was Henry Allen Moe, former director of the Guggenheim Foundation, who will serve as acting chairman of the council until Dr. Keeney finishes at Brown in June.

"Many humanists have things that are extremely interesting to them and on which they spent their lives, but which are very difficult to relate to the public welfare," Dr. Keeney said.

He recalled a college teacher of his who spent a lifetime studying the ramifications of the Middle-English verb "swa"—a declension of "to be."

"This is not in the public welfare but it kept this man excited for a long time and probably made him a better teacher."

This kind of research would be supported best by private foundations, like the Guggenheim, Dr. Keeney suggested.

While stressing that no policy decisions would be made until the President appoints the 26 member humanities council, Dr. Keeney said that programs for the "general welfare" might include:

A "good popular history" for the layman. Dr. Keeney said that both he and Mr. Moe, as amateur carpenters, had worked a good deal with laborers who "speculate a good deal more than people realize."

"They give considerable attention to important questions of aesthetics and morals, but they don't have any way of getting at them," he said. "People like that would like to read reliable and readable accounts of the past. There are plenty of reliable accounts around, but few of them are readable."

Television programs on commercial outlets, such as a "really first rate series on history." Dr. Keeney said that he doubts the ability of non-commercial educational television to be successful. "The only way to get good educational television is for the commercial stations to find it profitable."

An effort to relate diverse educational disciplines for young students.

"Most scholars of my genera-

tion were brought up to treat subjects in isolation from others," Dr. Keeney said. "I'm a historian and I never contemplated the influence of technological and scientific changes on society until I stopped being a historian."

"We need more of an effort to show young people that what they're studying in physics is a part of history and that history is a part of literature."

Dr. Keeney and Mr. Moe said that during the first year of operation, the council will meet once a month to establish policy lines and decide how to spend the 3 million dollars available to it this fiscal year.

Mr. Moe added: "We're going to start it easy and develop it as it goes. We're not going to let any organization think it owns us and that we'll do what it wants us to do. This may turn out to be the biggest boondoggle in recorded history, but we don't intend that kind of operation at all."