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May 8, 1973

To: Senator Pell

From: Stephen through Livy

On the attached, I have no input as far as the National Museum Act. However, I suggest that thought be given to a joint hearing with the Senate Arts and Humanities Special Subcommittee to consider your "Museum Services Act." This will allow us a wider range.

both input and output of data generated or required for the study or treatment of artefacts; provide data to a required standard on every job of conservation completed (If the work concerned a Smithsonian accession the data could also appear on receivers in the Smithsonian Archives or appropriate Registrar Office from the same transmission); be equipped and prepared to accept apprentices, one at a time, for training in specific skills.

b) Pay an honorarium to Institute Registrants (defined above) or to their organisations, from Institute funds, the amount to be: (i) directly proportional to the communication maintained inwards, measurable automatically as the elapsed time of terminal usage, plus (ii) recompense for time spent in training an apprentice.

c) As a beginning, use the facilities of ISD and CAL plus as many of the other conservation activities in the Smithsonian and in Washington as can be brought in. The system basically is already in operation in embryo in CAL but not developed far for lack of space. Ultimately endow a large building: the 60,000 square feet already needed for Smithsonian work by CAL could be expanded by perhaps only an extra 40,000 square feet, given modern equipment, to accommodate the extra teaching space and library facilities to communicate with extra-mural registrants.

Whether an Institute is established or not, an organisation of the kind described here appears to me to be the only viable means of establishing conservation competency in the Smithsonian adequate to its needs.

d) Once the system is working satisfactorily, extra funding would permit extension to, say, Winterthur, to any Regional center that may be in operation nationwide, and to the Conservation schools. Institute funding could then replace part of the grants being made to individuals and would be proportional to the use made of Institute data-facilities, which could reasonably be expected under this scheme to be available more efficiently than through individual private research.

e) When the Institute is in full operation it will attract many enquiries for practical conservation work. These can be handled as requests for data and forwarded to appropriate Institute-Conservators who will react as their own circumstances and interests allow.

It must be emphasised that no-one need feel threatened by such a system. It would only provide data, which could be used or not according to local judgement. The results of local work would be made available to others (with acknowledgement and date, thus establishing priorities automatically and preventing vexatious disputes). Payment would be proportional to input of data or to amount of apprentice training. This payment would enable small groups to give time to record-keeping that is of the utmost importance for posterity but tends to be neglected because it costs man-power.

The procedure of teaching by facsimile, followed when prepared by practical experience acquired from an expert working in his own workshop, would together enable conservation skills and attitudes to be spread quickly as needed.