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## THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE<sup>1</sup>

By Dr. SOLON J. BUCK

DIRECTOR OF PUBLICATIONS IN THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

It may be assumed that no explanation of the phrase "advancement of science" will be needed before this audience, though notice should perhaps be given that the word "science" as here used includes history and the social sciences. The word "archives," however, seems to have only a very vague connotation to most people and needs definition. The word is derived from the Greek *Archeion*, which means government house, and was at first applied only to the records and papers of a governmental agency. By analogy, however, it has come to be used for the accumulated

files of an institution, a firm or even a family; but it should never be used with reference to a collection of historical documents, no matter how valuable they may be, that have been assembled by an agency rather than produced or received in the course of the transaction of its business or that of the government or institution of which it is a part. The term is not properly applied, moreover, to individual documents, but only to the entire mass or collection of records of a government or institution or one of its subdivisions. The singular form "archive" is not ordinarily used in English and should never be applied to a single document.

The national archives, therefore, comprise the sum total of documents, records and papers made or re-

<sup>1</sup> Address of the retiring vice-president and chairman of Section L—Historical and Philological Sciences, American Association for the Advancement of Science, St. Louis, January 2, 1936.

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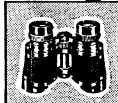
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