

*file -  
Literature*

Bennington College  
December 17, 1951

Memorandum

To: FB

From: CB

When the EPC discussed reappointments for Stange and Wilcox, Tom mentioned that budgetary considerations might make it necessary to reduce the size of the literature faculty. The Committee did not want the axe to fall on one of these two men just because they happened to be up for reappointment. This seems right to me. We have not yet even made a careful study of whether the first cut should come in literature, or whether we can afford to cut faculty at all.

There was a lot of talk by members of the EPC about the kind of people we want in literature. Stange and Wilcox were described as "the best of their kind", that is, bright men just out of graduate school, not yet established as independent scholars or critics and evidencing no interest in or talent for creative writing. Kit said the literature faculty had said many times that what they don't need is prima donnas — there is just too much work to do. On the other hand, we don't want to have a whole stable of hard-working, uninspired people. Burke came in to the conversation at this point and the EPC felt emphatically that he should be encouraged to continue on the alternate year basis. Stanley Hyman was mentioned, with Nowak, Foster, Feeley and Ford indicating that they thought he would be a fine addition. They were speaking of him as a full-time faculty member teaching language and literature, etc. as well as a course in criticism. I think no one would fight very hard for him if he were only interested in teaching one advanced course. This is what he told you he was interested in a couple of years ago (the Hymans will probably move back to this neighborhood).

It was stated that there are no specific holes to be plugged in the literature curriculum except possibly criticism during the years when Burke is not here. Kit says that she thinks there should be no formal course in criticism unless it was really hot. Criticism goes on all the time elsewhere.