

Warren Data—

Silence for 75 Years

IN THE NATION—

¶The assassination. Evidence and testimony before the Warren Commission on the assassination of President Kennedy has been stored in the National Archives to be kept from the public for 75 years. *Meaning: The complete story as assembled by the commission will not "be known in our lifetime."* Outlook: Details may never be known by the public—frequently witnesses were allowed to talk off the record, their testimony presumably unrecorded. *Reasons for the 75-year lock: To protect the innocent, national security.* Story, [Page 3]

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WASHINGTON.

Evidence and investigating reports used by the Warren Commission have been stored in a special vault in the National Archives Building and will remain inaccessible to the public for 75 years.

As a result, much of what was said off the record by some of the 552 witnesses during the investigation of President Kennedy's assassination "may not be known in our lifetime."

Only under extraordinary circumstances will parts of the historic material be made available to scholars and writers at an earlier date.

Dr. Robert Bahmer, deputy archivist, said yesterday that each agency that furnished data may declassify its material, or parts of it, and grant permission for responsible persons to see it.

However, an outsider wishing to see all of the secret material would have to get the approval of all the agencies involved in the investigation, including the FBI, CIA, State Department and U. S. Immigration Service.

Dr. Bahmer said yesterday that barring any grants of special permission the National Archives will follow its policy of keeping the material classified for 75 years. This, he observed, is the policy concerning all historic investigations.

He said that 75 years was chosen as the declassification figure because it is considered to be the life span of an individual. The period is intended to serve as protection for innocent persons who could otherwise be damaged because of their relationship

with participants in the case.

Frequently during the commission hearings, witnesses were allowed to talk off the record. These instances were noted in the 26 volumes of testimony released by the commission.

During the testimony of Secret Service chief James J. Rowley, for instance, he spoke off the record during a discussion concerning possible changes by his agency in checking buildings along routes followed by a Presidential motorcade.

Dr. Bahmer said that the Kennedy assassination material will be stored in an inner vault equipped with highly sensitive electronic detection devices to guard against fire and theft. The vault will be temperature - humidity controlled to prevent deterioration of the material.

The combination to the vault will be known by only two or three persons, he said.

An inventory of the material will take several weeks, he added. It is expected to fill almost 35 four-drawer cabinets.

The material will include

physical exhibits such as the rifle used to kill the President in Dallas Nov. 22, 1963.

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