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THE opportunity to embark upon the present investigation occurred in 1936, when I was connected with the University of London, through my election to a traveling fellowship sponsored by the Sir Richard Garton Foundation. This fellowship enabled me to begin work at the National Bureau of Economic Research, to which institution I owe an obligation that is not easily discharged. The project could never have been carried out but for the generous measure in which, from the outset, all the facilities of the National Bureau were made available to me. My original decision to undertake a study of this sort was due in large degree to suggestion and encouragement from two English friends at a time when I had not yet set foot on American soil. My interest in the phenomena of the business cycle in the United States, and especially in the problem of devising comprehensive measures of its intensity, was first aroused by Noel F. Hall, then of University College, London, and now of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research; while I resolved upon the ground plan of the present inquiry, involving a synoptic view of outlay and income at quarterly intervals, as the result, if I recall correctly, of a conversation with Colin Clark at Oxford in the fall of 1936.

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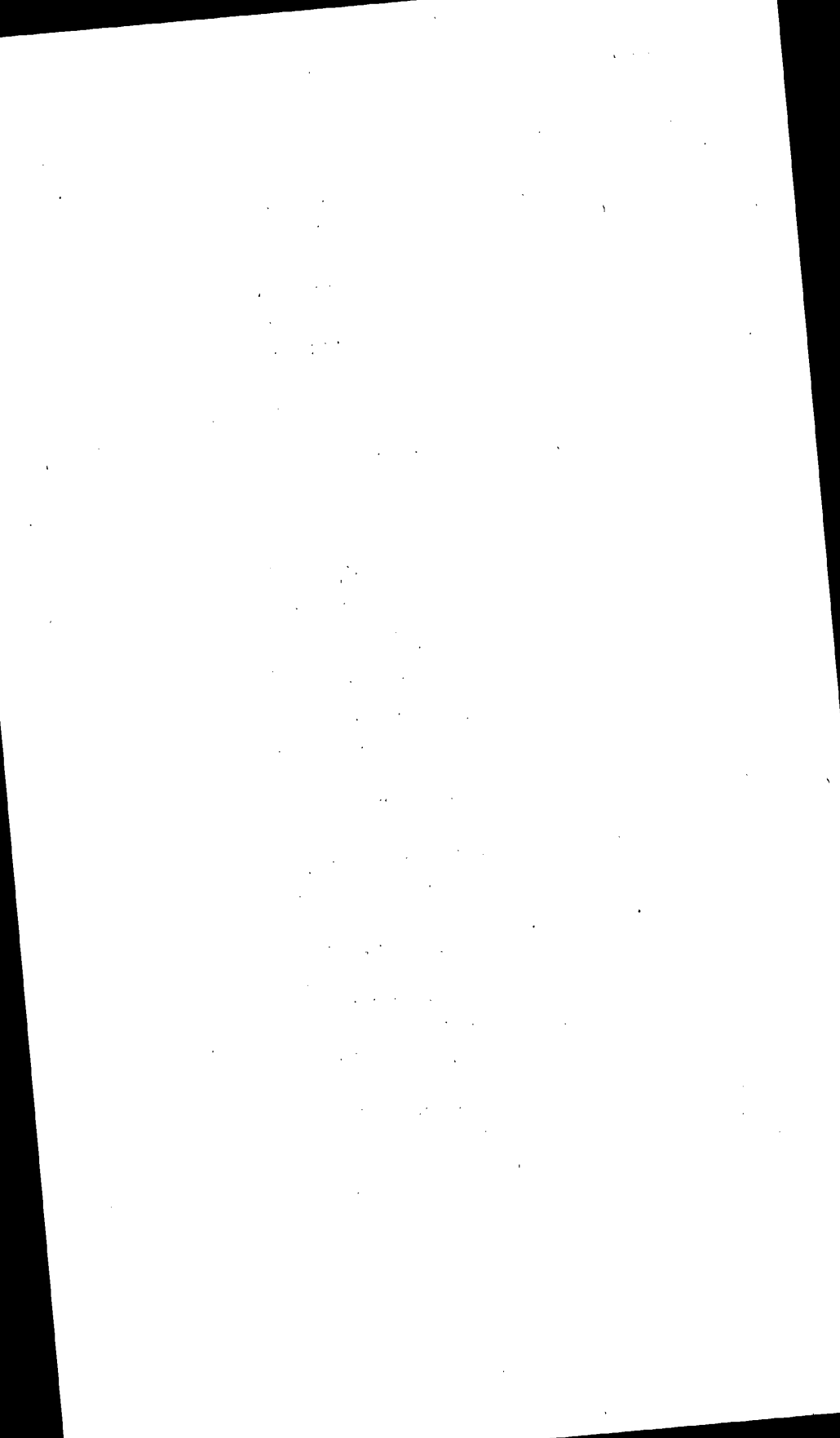
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