

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.
TRIBUNE

M - 240,275

S - 674,302

JUL 27 1973

William in Wonderland

We were wondering last week why William F. Buckley's magazine, the National Review, published documents attributed to government officials, calling for avoidance of long involvement in Vietnam, which Buckley later admitted were forged. We were unsatisfied then with Buckley's explanation that the purpose of the hoax was to prove that forgeries would be accepted as true if their contents were plausible.

Now, in a column elsewhere on this page, Buckley offers a further explanation, the thrust of which seems to be that actual documents saying essentially the same thing as the forgeries must exist somewhere. He starts with "the certitude that these papers are merely paraphrases of documents that actually do reside in government archives," then, without citing any evidence to support that belief, concludes that the publication of the forgeries proves "that the

Pentagon and the CIA are not composed of incompetents—the unwarranted conclusion to which many . . . were led by the fragmentary revelations (of the Pentagon Papers)."

He had touched on that same line of reasoning when he announced the hoax last week. Papers similar to his magazine's staff-written forgeries must exist, he said, because "it is inconceivable to me that there is nobody in the Pentagon, CIA or White House who has the same analytical powers as a junior editor of the National Review."

But saying that something *must* exist because you fervently wish it did is not the same as proving that it *does* exist. That distinction—that link with reality—seems to have escaped Buckley.

Oh dear, as Buckley is wont to say, what to do with people like that?