

DEPARTMENT OF SUPPLY

Document : ~~None~~ {letter, dated 26th August 1954} and {attachment
(1 sheet)}

Copy No : 1 and attachment

Forwarded to : Mr. R. N. Thompson, D.S.B., Dpt. Defence

Signature of Receiving Officer : *R. N. Thompson*

Date : 30/8/54

Please sign and return to

Mr. E. L. Sayce,
Department of Supply,
Research & Development Branch,
Box 2288U, G.P.O., MELBOURNE.

~~TOP SECRET~~

Copy No. 2.....

~~FROTH~~

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26th August, 1954

Mr. R. N. Thompson,
Director,
Defence Signals Branch,
Department of Defence,
MELBOURNE ... S.C.I.

Dear Mr. Thompson,

C O L O R O B

During our recent discussion on a number of matters it was agreed that Mr. Oxford (who had just returned from U.K.) and Mr. Strath should consider what information can be put forward to help you to decide whether a Colorob machine should be sought for your work. I am enclosing a copy of a note from them which is based on purely technical considerations. Dr. Fox has discussed these considerations, and also some others that are pertinent, with Messrs. Oxford and Strath, and the following additional comments are put forward.

On the question as to whether a machine of this general sort should be available on strategic grounds in one or more Commonwealth countries other than the U.K. we are of course unable to comment. However, if it be assumed that for this reason another machine is needed, the further question arises as to whether Colorob is the right machine to be obtained.

In considering this latter question it is apparent that financial aspects play an important part. If the price of the machine were negligible, doubts as to whether Colorob is the right machine might lose some force but they would not lose all force, since an unsuitable or troublesome machine, even at a gift, could obviously be expensive in Australian time and money. On the other hand if the price of the machine is large, say £40,000 for example, then you will of course consider whether this sum could be better spent on other things needed by D.S.B.

Yours sincerely,

Controller
Research and Development

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~~not sent~~

Dear Francis,

You will agree that your memo. 6208/005/2 of 6th August entitled: "Colerob", and its attached report by Messrs. Oxford and Strath should be seen only by persons who are listed. The procedure which makes it possible for us to give special treatment to cases of this sort is as follows:-

1. The memo. itself to be marked "Personal" and addressed to Mr. H. J. Brown (not Controller, Research Development).
2. The inner envelope to be addressed to "Mr. H. J. Brown or Mr. E. L. Sayce" and clearly marked (preferably stamped): "To be opened only by the addressee".
3. Outer envelope to be addressed similarly and clearly marked "Personal".
4. The communication to be sent by special S.H. bag.

It is possible for a special bag to be sent any day, & not on only the regular day in the week.

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RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT BRANCH

AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE SCIENTIFIC SERVICE

(When completed this form should be sent to Secretary, Research & Development Branch, Department of Supply, 339 Swanston Street, Melbourne, C.I.)

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All communications to be
addressed to the Chief
Superintendent, C.P.R.L.,
Box 1424, G.P.O., Adelaide.

Security Classification.....

TD-3.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

DEPARTMENT OF SUPPLY

The Laboratories include:

Electronics Division (Formerly E.R.L.)
Propulsion Division (Formerly P.R.L.)

CHEMICAL AND PHYSICAL RESEARCH LABORATORIES,

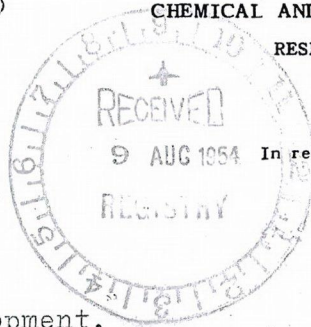
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT BRANCH,

SALISBURY, SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

For further information
refer to

Tel. ML7471, Ext. 757

Telegraphic Address:- Caplabs, Adelaide



In reply please quote...6208/OQ5/2.....

6th August, 1954.

The Controller,
Research and Development,
Department of Supply,
339 Swanston Street,
MELBOURNE. C.1. Vic.

COLOROB.

During recent discussions in Melbourne it was agreed that we should endeavour to form an opinion on the desirability of a Colorob machine being obtained by D.S.B.

2. We have now discussed this question at length and Mr. Oxford and Mr. Strath have prepared a statement of the position as they see it, a copy is attached.

3. This opinion is a somewhat negative one, but this is quite inevitable in the circumstances.

4. The enclosure is a document based on purely technical considerations and does not touch on two other relevant points. These are the "strategic" argument and the financial question, and I would like to comment on them.

5. It is possibly not arguable that on broad strategic grounds a machine of this general sort should be available in the commonwealth elsewhere than in the U.K. What may well be arguable is the further question is Colorob in fact the machine that will fulfil the "strategic" idea? To accept the strategic argument does not necessarily require the acceptance of Colorob linked with it.

6. As far as finance goes this is not our direct present concern as a Department. However the sum concerned is not irrelevant since:-

- (a) If the price were negligible, the doubts expressed in 5 above might lose some force. They would not lose all force however, since an unsuitable or troublesome machine, even at a gift, could obviously be very expensive in Australian time and money.
- (b) We might well be indirectly concerned if we hope to receive financial help from Defence as a contribution to the work of T Section. If £40,000 Australian is paid out for Colorob, we might suffer as a result of diminution of limited funds for this sort of activity.

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We think it very right that the appropriateness of the raising of this charge on Australia should be carefully examined.

FFX
(F.A. Fox)
Chief Superintendent,
C.P.R.L.

Received by hand from Mr. Lade, who is endeavouring to have the envelopes found in which it came *FF* 9/8

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We do not at the moment feel confident in recommending purchase of Colorob. In order to resolve the difficulty in which we find ourselves we should have to

- (a) have much more detailed knowledge regarding certain aspects of the design of Colorob as well as the philosophy behind its conception. Such information must at present be deduced from early laboratory models of parts of the equipment.
- (b) understand fully the latest processes available for deciphering Hagelin as well as those other crypt-analytic processes required now or in the future at D.S.B.
- (c) form an estimate of the extent to which Colorob could fill the requirements mentioned in (b) in the light of (a), together with the amount and level of effort required for installation, maintenance, and programming.

Sufficient information is now available for us to start work on (b), so far as Hagelin is concerned. Due to absence of information we cannot advise at the moment regarding the applicability of Colorob to future D.S.B. problems.

Following this study of Hagelin a lot more detailed information regarding probable performance of Colorob must be collected from G.C.H.Q.

This will be required in any case if we are to fulfil our functions as advised to D.S.B. and at the same time the underlying philosophy should be very fully discussed with those responsible there for the original conception.

(Sgd) A.J. Oxford

J.A.W. Strath.

Received under cover
of memo. 6208/005/2 dated
6/8/54 from Dr. Fox. *[Signature]*
9/8.

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