

Fig 11.

GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS HEADQUARTERS,

Tel.: CHELTENHAM 55321 EXT. 188

Room No. E1207

YOUR REFERENCE

OAKLEY,

G.C.H.Q. REFERENCE X/569/3309

PRIORS ROAD,

CHELTENHAM, GLOS



~~SECRET~~

5th May 1953

Declassified by ASD - 2024  
National security and/or personal  
information removed.

Mr. J. E. Rendle,  
S.U.K.O.,  
D.S.B.,  
Melbourne

Dear John,

I am sure that you will be generally aware of the exercise of sending Australian engineers to GCHQ to take part in a project of X Department which (of all the current projects) would be of greatest value to DSB's tasks. My own file starts with a letter from Thompson to Sir Edward, dated 30.10.1951, in which he suggests sending engineers to study with X. (I should say that I had been priming the pump in the preceding year.)

For various reasons there was no reply to this letter until 18. 1.52 when the suggested was warmly accepted, and the name of Don Overheu given. He was an Australian who had just returned from a period of two years' training in Dollis Hill which perfectly fitted him to make a contribution to X work.

██████████ came into the correspondence on 26.3.1952 with a letter to me proposing that a senior scientific officer, Mr. Robinson, as a key member of ██████████ team, be sent to join X. Overheu was played down as a trainee, although ██████████ took the tip and recruited him.

I think you received copies of this correspondence. A very unsatisfactory exchange went on over the next six months, as a result of which Overheu was diverted to a rather menial task in connection with L Department, and Robinson and a trainee Watson joined X in October. Watson had just completed a year out of his two years' training at RRDE. It is quite clear that they are not in the same class as Overheu, who is good. They are in fact both trainees and will not have contributed much to the project nor even have gained a great deal from it to take home by the end of the first year, in October 1953. It is true that Robinson is to stay until October 1954, and during his second year will do much more good to the project, himself and Australia. But we are worried about Watson, of whom the same could be true; and his present instructions are that he is to return to Australia in September when his two years in the U.K. are over.

We made it clear, or so we thought, to ██████████ when he was with us last year that we were in no position to take trainees, nor would the project be advanced by our doing so, nor would Australia be capable of setting out on the design of machinery when they returned. If only out of politeness we couldn't say much about Robinson in lieu of Overheu before we had some experience of him.

We write now to seek your advice on how best to secure these aims:

- 1) to bring ██████████ to agree that the development of the machine must be done over here (Robinson and Watson are 100% with us on this) and most of the construction controlled from this end if it is not actually done here.
- 2) to get Watson's stay with us extended for another 12 months, until September 1954.

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3) to establish appropriate contact with DSB so that the project (Colorob) is viewed as something to serve them and not just as something to build in Salisbury.

4) to get a mathematician seconded here for at least a year in order to learn the programming of the machine on DSB tasks. Last October [redacted] told us he was recruiting a mathematician whom he would send to us in January. Nothing has happened yet. I would emphasize DSB's vital interest in providing and retaining the man for this function which would be a sort of XR/HR in a small organisation.

I want to send [redacted] a forceful letter on aims 1), 2) and 4) in part, but I feel sure that you are in a position to advise on how to set about it in the best interests of DSB and in such a way as to bring converging influence to bear on [redacted]. For example, should I copy the letter to other Australians? Probably a better idea is that the Director here should write in similar terms to Fleming and perhaps Brown also. In particular the second aim, to keep Watson, is one whose fulfilment is very urgent if it is to succeed. Do you have any means of knowing whether Oxford, [redacted] chief, is coming to England in the near future? A talk between him and us would be invaluable. As for the third aim we feel that Australia will see no COLOROB at all unless, at the least, our suggestions are carried out. [redacted] visit last year did nothing to further it.

Yours sincerely,

*Jerry Morgan*

Copies to:

Director  
XE  
File

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