

Address reply to  
CHIEF SIGNAL OFFICER OF THE ARMY,  
Washington, D. C.

Engineering DIVISION  
and Research  
jom:ho

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF SIGNAL OFFICER,  
WASHINGTON,  
10 December, 1919

My dear Colonel Fabyan:

Your telegram of 5.00 p.m. of the 8th was received here about noon, the 9th. Your force is undoubtedly to be congratulated upon the decipherment of the messages which you announce in your telegram. I take off my hat to riverbank!

The additional tapes which we were to send have been ready for several days, but on account of the pressure of other business they have not been mailed. In view of your telegram they will not be sent to you.

In connection with your study of the decipherment of these messages which you announce, this office is interested in securing from you an accurate and complete statement as to the following facts:

1. Was the decipherment carried out exactly as proposed in your manuscript furnished this office? Was any other method employed and if so, the details thereof?
2. What information, if any, other than that furnished by this office, did you acquire which assisted you in the solution of these messages?

You may perhaps smile at this question, but knowing your detective instincts and some of the ramifications of your system which can place operators in government departments, I am rather curious to know whether you resorted to any such device in this case in order to obtain information concerning these messages, or anything which would lead to their decipherment. This should be a straight forward acknowledgment on your part if anything of this kind has been done, simply to assist us in determining how far your solution did, or did not, depend upon factors which may, or which may not be counted upon in the case of the enemy.

3. All statements, if any, or suggestions forwarded by Colonel or Mrs. Hitt in connection with the decipherment of these messages as a result of their intimate connection with this office, which you received during the course of this experiment and which may have

led you to the solution.

Of course, it is quite reasonable to suppose that you have not secured any information other than that furnished by this office, because we are well aware of the capabilities of the operating force at your Laboratories which have already won international renown.

Now that you have announced the decipherment of the messages, we are looking forward to perhaps receiving some further information of value in connection with the operation of the apparatus. The dangers, of course, in not encoding the cipher indicators were clearly demonstrated by you some time ago with the result that it was decided that anything further in the way of official business sent over the cipher printer would have these indicators encoded. The proposition now before the house is, therefore, whether or not one Colonel Fabyan is willing to have his force tackle a still more difficult problem, or rather two problems; and whether or not he is willing to give a decision at once in regard to the possibility of deciphering messages prepared in two different ways:

1. Cipher indicators to be encoded, and the cipher to be used for the body of the message alone: two cipher tapes to be used as in former practice.
2. Only one cipher tape of great length to be used containing a running key selected without rhyme or reason, body of the message only to be enciphered and key indicators to be encoded.

The opinion of Riverbank is requested as to whether or not they deem both or either of these methods as indecipherable. If either or both are believed decipherable, are you willing to undertake the decipherment of messages prepared according to either or both schemes?

I am glad for many reasons that you have deciphered these messages, prepared according to our first scheme, but, in particular for one, and that is that you have now demonstrated to your own satisfaction that the messages were prepared exactly as stated, without trick or artifice being introduced, and that they really did make good English sense after all. I frankly confess that I have deeply resented the implications made from time to time and some very recently, that I was resorting to petty trickery in preparing your messages, and not playing the game. I trust I will be restored to good standing in your estimation as a result of this work.

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Upon arrival of the English decipherment, I shall take the matter, officially, to the Chief Signal Officer of the Army with a view to having recognition accorded Riverbank for all it has done. I do not see how the government can ever repay Colonel Fabyan for what he has done in tackling problems such as these.

I have a strange hunch that some of Senator Falls information about Carranza probably passed through Riverbank. Am I a good guesser?

Best regards, as ever,



P. S. Hope you received the two vacuum tubes mailed the day before Thanksgiving.