

GEORGE FABYAN
CHICAGO4131-526
27
WAR DEPARTMENT

1919

P. O. BOX 435

August 18, 1919.

Dear Major Crockett:

Now comes the Post Mortem on the conference. I was grateful that you were present as General Churchill's representative and that you had the opportunity of forming your own impression. And if consistent, I will ask you to forward this letter to General Churchill with such endorsement as you deem proper.

Riverbank is unable to arrive at any conclusion why Colonel Mauborgne at first refused to admit that we had broken the Cipher as used at the time we so reported. He finally, begrudgingly, admitted that we had broken the Cipher the way we thought it was used or the way Mr. Gherardi had used it and he asked if we claimed we could break the Cipher in all the different ways that the machine might be used. He knew that we had made no such claim.

It was evident, in Colonel Mauborgne's opinion, that we made a mistake in going over his head. He stated that Yardley had reported to him that we had broken the Cipher and he seemed anxious to show that we had not done so and especially anxious to show that we did not know how the machine was used and this, in spite of the fact that Friedman, Burdick and Powell had all seen the machine in use as late as last April.

The directions for the use of a machine of this character are well thought out, typewritten and mimeographed. The rough pencil sketch as to the way they proposed to use the machine is not well thought out as evidenced by answers to questions as to whether they were going to use the punctuation, etc. Colonel Mauborgne stated that the Cipher systems were "subject to change like the styles of women's hats" and we agree with him.

Colonel Mauborgne stated that neither he nor the M, I. 8 had ever attempted to decipher the work of the A. T. & T. Machine and yet, they have placed themselves on record that it was indecipherable.

Riverbank was invited to work out some puzzles in the shape of Cipher messages made by using modifications and changes in the old system and if we succeeded, I presume there are a thousand other "little refinements" and changes which could be made by an individual but which would not be practical in actual use.

You doubtless remember the position Mauborgne took on his DeYaub Cipher which he is anxious to have the Army adopt when Friedman, Yardley, Burdick all told him that if used as he stated, it would have to yield to the attack.

Frankly, our people asked "What's the use"? There appeared to be other things at stake besides the vulnerability of the Cipher. These will probably be evidenced by Colonel Mauborgne's report by the Chief of the Signal Corps.

Sincerely yours,

