

March 22, 1920.

My dear Colonel Mauborgne:

In reference to further proposed modifications of the method used by the A. T. & T. Cipher Printing Machine, such as are continuous, running, random mixed key tape, etc.

We are not able to express any opinion as to whether or not such a system would be difficult of decipherment, that is, how difficult of decipherment it would be. In our opinion, it would require anywhere from six to eight months and it is obvious that for us to express any opinion, at this time, as to its decipherability, would be foolish.

On the face of it and in view of our experience, we do not hesitate to state that it would be impractical, if not impossible, in actual use, unless we are laboring under some misapprehensions as to the working of the machine.

We have a high respect for the machine and its ability. We feel that it has been demonstrated that the people who are, perhaps, best acquainted with its mechanical operation, know but little or nothing concerning the fundamental principles of printing or cipher; that the machine could be improved by the combination of this knowledge, is obvious, but to what extent, Riverbank is not prepared to say at this time and could not be expected to express an opinion without the opportunity of experimenting with the machine itself.

With assurances of my warm, personal esteem and regard,

Sincerely yours,

March 24, 1920.

E. F. McOARRON,  
MAJOR, A. G.

My dear Colonel Fabyan:

[ In reply to your letter of March 22nd, I just had a long talk with Colonel Mauborgne and have gone over with him the papers which you so kindly entrusted to him.

Your very brilliant scientific achievement reflects great credit upon you and your whole personnel. It would be impossible to exaggerate in paying you and Riverbank the deserved tribute for this very scholarly accomplishment. ]

As Colonel Mauborgne explained that the safeguards which he now proposes do not seem impractical, I surely think that Colonel Mauborgne and Colonel Hitt should be given every opportunity to work out these ideas, and that the result of their work should again be put to the most searching test.

Very sincerely yours,

Colonel George Fabyan,  
P. O. Box 435,  
C h i c a g o .