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Votre référence :

Notre référence : JBA/C

Meyrin-Genève, le 7 March, 1961

Dear Jack,

I do not find very much to disagree with in your Atlas paper. Supposing that this machine now belongs to NIRS the problem is the relationship between Rutherford Laboratory and the Computer Laboratory. Many people will argue that it should be a division of the Rutherford Laboratory - administrative convenience, etc. I am inclined to favour a separate existence since the Computer Laboratory is a national service only partially linked with the Rutherford Laboratory. The laboratory staff should all belong to the Laboratory - visitors, etc., can include Rutherford Laboratory, universities, Culham and Harwell. To get a good spirit the laboratory and its staff must feel that they are one body offering something to the nation's physicists at large. You should also mention foreign visitors and fellows.

What is to be done about the Orion at Rutherford Laboratory? Should it be part of the Computer Laboratory or not? If yes, then the Computer Service could be in common and also the Mathematics group. However Culham might inherit the Harwell Mercury - but then the Computer Laboratory could run it for us at Culham and also the Orion at Rutherford Laboratory. These problems need discussing and solving. Also what will be your relationship with other computers in U.K., e.g. Stretch at Aldermaston. You see why I favour a separate Computer Laboratory independent of the Rutherford Laboratory - the business is different.

I think it most important to press the forward thinking on programming and the use of computers. Computers are part of experimental physics and the "experiments" need developing, new ideas, modifications, as in physics research.

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The analogy with accelerators is good. However we always arrange that the Machine group has a vested interest in development of the use of the machine. In your case it would mean combining the Machine group and the Computer Service. We do this to keep up the morale of the Machine group but perhaps it is not necessary in your case.

If you have 37 staff for your present Mercury computer service, can you manage with 55-69 with an Atlas? I cannot judge but it sounds on the small size. ^a

On the payment side, I assume that now all the staff will belong to NIRNS. I should fight against a compromise, e.g. part Harwell staff - there would be no corporate spirit in that case. I should also get direct access to the NIRNS board, not access through the Rutherford Laboratory. If this is done then NIRNS could foot the bill, i.e. a national service to everyone in U.K. paid by NIRNS and the Treasury. Anything else would be complicated by DSIR, UGC, etc. battles. Finally the Treasury pays anyway, so why complicate the issue! You can charge the foreigners if they are allowed to use the service.

Finally I think that you are in for an interesting but necessary fight which is part of a bigger battle for science involving Culham and other physics research in the U.K. Since I shall be involved, we should have an enjoyable time ahead of us in the next few years. Space research will also need this computer and you should contact Massey about this.

Yours sincerely,

John.

J.B. Adams

P.S. These views are of course personal ones and don't reflect any policy associated with my various jobs!

Received 8/5/6