

GONVILLE AND CAIUS COLLEGE,
CAMBRIDGE.

18 August, 1952.

T.G. Pickavance, Esq.,
Ministry of Supply,
Atomic Energy Research Establishment,
Harwell,
Didcot, Berks.

Dear Pickavance,

Thank you for your letter about the proposed European Laboratory. I am glad you have written at length although I shall not be able to reply in the same way because I am trying to deal with some urgent matters before I go away for a few days' holiday. You have mentioned a number of interesting points. On some of these there is considerable agreement, while on others there is a sharp difference of opinion. For the reason I have given I cannot go into all these questions now, but I should like to outline as briefly as I can the present position.

The question which has been under discussion for some months is whether this country should sign the agreement put forward at Geneva last February, under which a European Nuclear Research Council was set up to consider plans for establishing a central laboratory and for programmes for building machines.

The Sub-committee of which I am chairman recommended some months ago that this country should sign the Geneva agreement and recommended certain forms of cooperation, but also stated that they were not convinced on the evidence then available that a Bevatron of the size built in the U.S. was necessary. I believe that the Sub-committee was unanimous in making these recommendations. *[at that time; but some opinions have changed since then.]*

The agreement was not signed, and has not yet been signed, by this country. The first difficulty, raised by the Foreign Office, is that the agreement was very badly drafted. The F.O. also pointed out that, as this agreement is a matter for Governments, the consent of Parliament was necessary. They were able to produce some

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qualifying and explanatory clauses which would clarify the position and, in spite of their general objection (well-founded in my opinion) to the whole procedure, they then accepted our view that our Government should sign.

The second difficulty was raised by the Treasury. Their view is that although the agreement did not commit this country to any great expenditure it might be held to be committed to go on with the big scheme if the other countries agreed to do so; and the Treasury is perfectly clear that we cannot afford to spend such a large amount of money.

I think we are bound to accept such a definite statement from the Treasury.

My Sub-committee has recently repeated its recommendation that this country should sign the Geneva agreement on the understanding that we were not committed to any expenditure beyond that involved in making available facilities in this country and in cooperating with the various Study Groups. They added that they had not yet reached a decision about the desirability of constructing the large Bevatron and that, in making their recommendation, they accepted the position that H.M. Government might feel unable to give any financial support to the construction of the large machine and consequently to further formal participation in the scheme for a European Nuclear Laboratory.

These do
not agree?
Jan 1.

There are two points which it is important to bear in mind.

The first is that the procedure rushed into by the French and some others, and urged by Unesco, has made the matter into one for Governments, and that our Government at any rate can do nothing without the consent of Parliament.

The second is that this country is so close to bankruptcy that all expenditure is very closely scrutinised by the Treasury. (They may think, and I should be inclined to agree, that there are more urgent matters than this, if we have money to spare.)

There is further the question of interference with re-armament and with the export program.

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We in this country have had other troubles to contend with. Because Unesco put its finger in the pie the matter had to be handled by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry, generally after the lapse of some considerable time, consults the British Committee for Cooperation with Unesco in the Natural Sciences, the Chairman of which is the Foreign Secretary of the Royal Society. My committee is a Sub-Committee of this British Committee. We report to the main committee, which then makes recommendations to the Royal Society and to the Minister of Education. Only the Minister can take action. This is a very tedious procedure, as you will imagine; I hope it may soon be changed.

Yours sincerely,

J. Chadwick.

I do not agree with your view about the accelerator program in this country. There is a great difference between building a machine in a university and in Harwell. — and a big difference in the use it can be put to, in the widest sense. The N.P.C. had nothing to do with the Harwell cyclotron, which in my opinion is poor value for money.

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