

3rd April, 1962

Mr. A. E. Drake,
United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority,
11, Charles II Street,
London, S.W.1.

Dear Drake,

University use of A.E.A. Computers

I am sure that you will wish to consult Sir William Penney about Turnbull's letter to you dated 29th March. Sir William asked me to press for a decision, as I have done, but to refer back to him if difficulty persisted. I am not writing to Turnbull again, but my comments on his latest letter are as follows:-

- (a) I did not know that Turnbull had promised the Treasury that the extra cost would be made good 100% by the Universities, and I cannot help saying that it is a pity we were not all told of this at a much earlier stage. He did not mention this in his original letter to you.
- (b) I am not saying that the Institute can find an extra £½ million in 1962/63 and subsequent years, and it is therefore wrong to assume that the H.I.R.E.C. budget contains this amount of slack. In 1962/63 we have made a guess that perhaps £200,000 of time would be asked for by universities altogether, and of this some fraction would be for work in our own programme, which we would pay for in any case. The Institute would have to decide how much money they could allocate to the scheme. The initial allocation would be very much smaller than £200,000; at this early stage in the financial year I would propose to allocate £50,000, and the question of further allocation would depend upon the state of finance later. This would of course not be the happiest situation, but it is the best that could be expected with a new scheme introduced at this time. The Treasury were aware of the possibility that we might finance university use of Authority computers when our grant for 1962/3 was discussed with them on 2nd January, 1962.

We would hope to have a little experience of the scheme before finalising our estimates for 1963/64, and it is possible that the scheme would be such a success that we should feel it right to try to get extra money from the Treasury for it for 1963/64, but we don't know now.

- (c) I do not know how the D.S.I.R. would handle the financing if the money had to come from them. Of course both they and we would try to make the best arrangements possible. From preliminary discussions between Joliffe and Howlett, I think that the D.S.I.R. would be able to allocate a block of money for use at Howlett's discretion for relatively small computations including exploratory ones, so that the number of cases referred to the D.S.I.R. would be reduced. Nevertheless the number would probably be large, and the cases would we think arise from day to day. The idea that H.I.R.E.C. would arrange the applications in an order of priority and that they would then

XXXXXX
1900 Extn. 368

3rd April, 1962

- 2 -

Mr. A. E. Drake

be referred to the D.S.I.R. for further consideration in competition with demands of different kinds, seems to presuppose that the requests would be available in detailed form well in advance. I do not know whether this would be so, but I rather doubt it. In any case the imposition of two successive scientific judgements of the proposals is clearly very undesirable.

Yours sincerely,

T. G. Pickavance

c.c. Sir William Penney
Dr. J. A. V. Willis