

Engineering
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29th, March 1919

My dear Colonel Fabyan:

With reference to your recent communication to Captain Powell enclosing two translated messages which had been prepared by the American Telegraph and Telephone Company on the cipher printing telegraph apparatus made for the Signal Corps by that Company, and with further reference to the copy of one of the messages which you sent to Mr Gherardi, New York, about which I wrote you recently giving it as my opinion that we would find that you had not succeeded in breaking the printing telegraph cipher as we used it, I am now convinced that you have no moral or other right to make such claim, if the two messages which you deciphered represent the sole results of your labours on the seven messages forwarded to you by Mr Gherardi.

At my request, Mr Gherardi has forwarded to this office complete copies of all the correspondence between the A. T. and T. Company and yourself on the subject of this cipher, including copies of the seven messages sent you and the letter of transmittal which enclosed these messages, in which it was pointed out that "you would very likely be able to decipher messages two, three and probably four," which is apparently all you have done, because these messages had not been enciphered by the method which the Cipher Bureau, M. I. D. stated provided absolute security.

What you have accomplished, of course, could not be done by the ordinary amateur "cipher crackman", but it certainly could be accomplished by our Government cipher experts and by the cipher bureaus of foreign governments. Due credit should be given your organization for the demonstration of its capabilities, particularly as we are aware of the fact that it contributed so heavily to our governmental service by way of furnishing personnel which left you without what were considered your best people. I have no

Colonel Fabyan:

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doubt that the two young ladies who visited Washington and saw the cipher printer in operation were highly instrumental in the solution of the two ciphers furnished by the A. T. and T. Company. Please convey to them my highest appreciation for what they have done. However, the foundation of the cipher upon which we base our claim of absolute secrecy has not been shaken by your attack unless you can show us in concrete form, some evidence of having broken the ciphers which were mentioned by Mr Gherardi as being in the form used by the United States Government, or if you will succeed in breaking the cipher which I am sending you today as an enclosure to another communication.

The other message prepared on the mechanical enciphering machine, which I promised to send you, is about one-third complete. My time is so limited that I have very little to spend on the preparation of it, but I expect to get it out within two days.

You may be certain that my attitude so far as all this cipher business is concerned is not antagonistic, and that I am willing to give credit where credit is due, but from the standpoint of a government official, I must necessarily take the "show me" attitude and make strenuous efforts to rebut any claim you may make which may be based upon false assumptions or a misunderstanding of the problem presented. It is noted that neither of your letters refer to the letter to you in which Mr Gherardi pointed out that the messages you broke could be broken. I trust that none of this discussion which has arisen, or which may arise, will in any way operate to sever the good relations between yourself and myself which I believe have existed since my first visit to Riverbank.

With best wishes, I remain

Sincerely yours,

Colonel George Fabyan,
Chicago, Illinois
Post Office Box No. 435