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Memorandum L-58

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Digital Computer Laboratory  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

SUBJECT: GROUP LEADERS' MEETING, AUGUST 25, 1952

To: Group Leaders

From: David R. Brown

Date: August 27, 1952

Attending: Jay W. Forrester, D. R. Brown, C. H. Dodd, R. R. Everett,  
C. R. Wieser, and P. Youtz

- Agenda:
1. Intercom System for WWI
  2. WWI Installation
  3. October Meeting of Direction Systems Research Committee
  4. October Meeting of the IRE Computers Committee
  5. Indoctrination Program
  6. Visit to Remington Rand

1. Intercom System for WWI

The present WWI Intercom System must be expanded to Room 156 and should also include communication with Rooms 222 and 224 and Test Control for Bob Wieser's work. The system can be a common one for Groups 61 and 64. A satisfactory system has been found--one which has been recommended by Division 3. It will have nine master stations, four or five slave stations and cost in the neighborhood of \$2,000. The new intercom system will be separate from the telephone system.

2. WWI Installation

Dodd reported that the installation is on schedule but several unexpected difficulties have arisen. One of these difficulties is a new prf sensitivity in flip-flop storage observed on S1 orders. Another difficulty is a low margin of operation of the PSTR. This low margin of the PSTR has been observed since it was transferred to the new In-Out Control. The prf sensitivity in flip-flop storage and the low margin in PSTR will have to be cleaned up before any additional tests are made. This delay may run the installation period into one or two days of next week. As soon as the present difficulties have been cleared up and before the installation is complete, the programs required for the demonstration interceptions will be tested.

Dodd also reported on the status of the magnetic-tape units. One of the tape-handling mechanisms operates well, the second fairly well, but

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three others do not work at all. The trouble is due to a side shift of the tape on reverse. This side shift may be observed not only on reverse but after any stop. The new In-Out System will be tested with the one good tape unit and the others will be repaired and put into operation at a later date. Raytheon has been consulted but will probably furnish little assistance. Wieser suggests that Building 32's shop be asked to check the dimensions of the tape-handling mechanism. They can probably locate the trouble in a very short time.

3. October Meeting of the Direction Systems Research Committee

On October 7 and 8, the Direction Systems Research Project of the National Bureau of Standards will meet in Cambridge. This laboratory will take part in the meeting. Forrester will have more detailed information later.

4. October Meeting of the IRE Computers Committee

Brown announced that the IRE Electronics Computers Committee would meet at the Digital Computer Laboratory during October. This will be a one-day meeting and the exact date is not set. Clearance will not be required for those attending the meeting.

5. Indoctrination Program

New staff members who have arrived since the last indoctrination course are sufficiently numerous to warrant several one-week indoctrination courses. Brown will so inform Nelson.

6. Visit to Remington Rand

Forrester reported on the visit of himself, Everett, Wieser and Taylor to Remington Rand. The first day was spent at Norwalk, Connecticut, where they were warmly received. The morning was spent in discussion with General Groves on the general topic of computing machines. The group toured the Norwalk Laboratories in the afternoon. Little work seemed to be going on and that was mostly mechanical. The group did see an electronic computer somewhat larger than the IBM 604. Mr. Rand and General MacArthur attended one of the meetings. Rand asked about magnetic devices. They appeared to be very interested in the use of magnetic devices for computing and amplifier techniques. Eckert-Mauchly is working on magnetic techniques for computers and Remington Rand has allocated \$500,000 for research on magnetic devices. The second day was spent at Eckert-Mauchly in Philadelphia. Eckert-Mauchly is making its fifth UNIVAC and has two or three UNIVACs running at the plant. Eckert-Mauchly has been split into several parts. One part is the research and development section under Eckert. Another part is the UNIVAC production department. The third day was spent at ERA at St. Paul, Minnesota. The work at ERA was most impressive. The group met Mr. Parker, President of the company, which is not a division of Rem Rand although it is owned by Rem Rand. ERA is attempting to standardize their drums and panels so that they will be

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able to fill orders rapidly for maintenance and equipment in the future. Eckert-Mauchly is working on high-speed drums which will operate at the speed of 100,000 rpm.

Forrester announced that a manufacturer for WWII would be chosen before the Scientific Advisory Board meets in September. Five companies have been considered--Bell Telephone Laboratories and RCA have withdrawn. Of the remaining three, the order of preference is IBM, Remington Rand and Raytheon.

Signed

*David R. Brown*

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Secretary

(g.k.)

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