Mr. P.F. Butler,
Chief Scientific Liaison Officer,
Australian Scientific Liaison Office,
Africa House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2.

WI/MS

Just for information in connection with any
further discussions you may have with Lance.
BY AIRMAIL

(W. Ives)

29th October, 1962.

Dr. G. N. Lance,
"Wellan",
Coombe Valley Road,
Preston,
Weymouth,
DORSET, ENGLAND.

Dear Dr. Lance,

We were pleased to receive a cable from Butler
intimating that you have accepted the position of Officer-
in-Charge of our computer group. I understand that you
have now been able to let us know when you will be free
to leave your present employment and when you expect to
sail from the United Kingdom.

The printing of the specification has now been
completed and the closing date for tenders will be 18th
January, 1963. We expect that the tenders will be valid
for about two months, but naturally we want you to have
as much time as possible to examine the tenders. We shall
arrange for a great deal of the preliminary work to be done
before you arrive here and we shall keep in touch with you
in the course of your voyage out.

As no doubt many people said to you while you were
in Australia, one essential aspect about the unit which we
are now setting up is integration between the satellites and
the main computer. The Executive adopted this basis so that
scientists throughout Australia could have access to a
computer of high capacity without our being put to the expense
of installing large computers in many centres. For this
reason we intend to ensure that the satellites will be
sufficiently compatible with the main computer to enable work
commenced on a satellite to be taken to the main computer if
at any stage greater capacity is needed to handle a particular
problem.

We have just in the last day or two had a letter
from Bennett in Sydney saying that he would like to tender
the provision of a service equivalent to that which might
be available from one of our satellites. We shall send him
a copy of the specification but of course we intend that each
of the satellites should be completely under C.S.I.R.O. control
and, indeed, for C.S.I.R.O. use only except during the early
days of operation when there should be unused capacity.

As I think I said to you when we had a brief
conversation here, we regard it as a critical part of our
whole plan to develop an effective research group at the
centre. We have always believed that, although an important
part of our responsibility will be to provide an effective
scientific computing service, we should also make a strong
effort to develop the subject of computing in relation to
scientific research in general. We believe that there are
a few people in Australia, including Pearcey, Hill and Penny,
who have the necessary background to become key members of
this research group. In addition we have a number of applications

in response to the advertisement that we put out a little while ago, and I shall see that a schedule of these is sent over to you straight away.

In this connection we shall have to determine the most appropriate niche for Pearcey who was a candidate for the position to which you were appointed and who has been on our staff for some years. Pearcey is highly regarded as a mathematician, and there is no need for me to remind you of his earlier accomplishment in conceiving and building CSIRAC and of his more recent work in computer theory. The Executive considers that Pearcey is capable of high level research in computing and promoted him this year to the rank of Senior Principal Research Officer. This, as you will appreciate, indicates that the Executive has decided that Pearcey's research is of such calibre that he can be given great freedom in choosing and guiding an extensive research programme.

I should be glad to have your views on the way in which I might encourage Pearcey to plan for the future. Once you get here, of course, this will be no part of my function, but as Pearcey is understandably disappointed about his not being appointed Officer-in-Charge, I am anxious to do anything I can to help him decide his future field of work. Over the coming months we shall have to take many decisions on your behalf and I think we might regard Pearcey as your deputy during this period. I have in mind the fact that we shall have to answer questions from would-be tenderers about the specification, that there will be many details to resolve in connection with the building, and that a lot of work will be involved in detailed examination of the tenders after 18th January.

I had reached this stage in my letter to you when your note of 22nd October arrived. We will not cut the building down but we have secured approval from Treasury to spend £150,000 on it. This means that we should get a building worthy of the purposes for which it will be used.

As far as the applicants for the research officer position are concerned, Balding is writing to you, and you may hear from him by the same mail. We hope that you will interview promising U.K. candidates and that you will indicate whom you think we should interview on your behalf in Australia.

I do want to make it clear that my only concern during the few months before you get here is to see that progress is as rapid as possible and in accordance with your own ideas about what should be done. You will appreciate that I shall depend very largely on Pearcey and Hill until you get here, and on past experience over twelve months or more, I have learned that I can confidently rely upon them for advice on the many issues which one must expect to come up. They are bound to be confronted by a lot of detailed laborious work between now and March, and I think it necessary that we all should understand the basis upon which we are trying to function.

I shall see that we keep you fully informed right through the exercise, and if there are particular matters on which you would like to be consulted by cable, please don't hesitate to indicate them so that we can avoid taking decisions in areas where you particularly want to resolve the matter personally.

Yours sincerely,

W. Ives
ASSOCIATE MEMBER OF EXECUTIVE.