

NAVAL ORDNANCE LABORATORY
Navy Yard, Washington, DC

2 August 1945

Dr. R. E. Buchanan
Dean of the Graduate School
Iowa State College
Ames, Iowa

Dear Dean Buchanan,

Today I had visit from Dr. Kirkham. He is anxious to know your decision relative to his services. I have taken the pains to go over his article rather carefully, and I believe my remarks to you are quite accurate. To wit: This paper does not represent extraordinary ability in mathematical physics or its applications, but that it is interesting to find a man willing to apply such methods to problems in soils.

I am not nearly so well informed as to Mr. Kirkham's ability to meet the problems which the schools of our institution at Ames will require, and I believe that too much dependency should not be placed on his general abilities. At the same time, it has to be recognized that the staffing of colleges and universities shows every prospect of being extremely difficult in the years to come, and anything that can be should be done to hedge in this direction.

I have just returned from Boston where Dr. Fox and I had an extensive visit. He, incidentally, is not as pessimistic as I about the problem of recruiting properly skilled staffs for colleges. At the same time I can find little to dispel my gloom. During this visit, I contacted four former members of university staffs who are doing everything they can to avoid returning to the academic fold. Of course, it will be true that certain of these men will find their services not wanted when the war is over, but these will be more formally and less vitally minded people, and to staff our institutions with this class is something we have been altogether too guilty of in the past.

Very sincerely yours,

J. V. Atanasoff

JVA/vpc