

18 January 1955

Dr. Stewart S. Cairns  
 Institut de Mathematique  
 Palais de l'Universite  
 Strasbourg, France

Dear Stewart:

I have been a long time in getting down to answering your letter of 7 November 1954, which I enjoyed reading.

How is the SIMCA behaving for you? I envied you the two-weeks' period during which you could sight-see and sample the restaurants of the Latin Quarter in Paris. I also envied you the fascinating three-weeks' tour of Spain because it brought back memories of a three-months' stay in that delightful country way back in 1932. Elizabeth was with me at the time and we enjoyed the visit no end.

Robertson is always busy and bogged down with duties. I talked with him just a few minutes ago on the telephone. He has been in Washington for a few days and is going back on Friday. As usual he is rushing around so madly I will not get a chance to see him here, but I may see him in Paris soon because I have some business to do in Europe and will be coming over very shortly. If there is a chance of my doing so, maybe I will make a visit to see you and Mrs. Cairns in Strasbourg.

I note what you say about having written Leibler in connection with some consulting work next summer. Of course, if your Fulbright is extended, that will make a change in your plans.

Thank you for your offer to be of assistance to me. At the moment the only thing that I have in mind as a possibility is my usual search for books to add to my library collection. If you should happen to run across any cryptographic items in your browsing around book shops in Strasbourg, do please drop me a note by airmail telling me the title and the price. In the meantime, a friend has written me for information about a Frenchman named Delastelle who wrote a book on cryptography some time around 1890. I would be most appreciative if you could find out at least the following:

What was his name - other than F. Delastelle?  
 Dates of birth and death.  
 Where did he live - what did he do?  
 Was he military, diplomatic, or other?  
 And anything else of interest.

Please do not go to any great trouble in trying to get this bibliographical material because do not think the Frenchman was of sufficient importance to ask anyone to knock himself out in getting information about him.

I am beginning to think about a Board meeting some time this spring but have no concrete problem in mind. We are having as visitors for a couple of weeks about a half a dozen members of SCAMP who are here for special orientation.

With cordial greetings to both of you and best wishes for the New Year, I am,

Sincerely yours,

WILLIAM F. FRIEDMAN