



BRITISH EMBASSY,

BELGRADE.

24th August 1950.

P2/57/50.

G 19210/3

Dear Department,

Your letter PG19210/1 of 27th July. Tests which we conducted here about a year ago proved that the Hellschreiber machine is difficult to operate here for two reasons:-

- (a) This part of the world is accepted as one of the poorest for good radio reception. This is borne out by the DWS staff.
- (b) Despite the claim that the Hellschreiber is a self-operating machine, which when switched on will produce its tape, poor radio reception and fluctuating electrical current conditions combine to make this ideal impossible of achievement here.

2. The only way round these two difficulties, if it is desired to operate the Hellschreiber, is for a London-based operator to be provided. I cannot see any possibility of obtaining a local person with the necessary qualifications to do this, nor do I think it would be possible to find a morse operator, due to the fact that an essential qualification for the performance of either of these tasks, to be of use to us, would be a knowledge of English. This would make it difficult to find such a person.

3. This raises the whole question of whether the results would be worth the cost. What the Information Department most needs is a news service. This need we meet at present by our BBC Bulletin and press comment. This could possibly be improved upon, and the effort needed to produce it certainly reduced, by the installation of a magnetic tape recorder which would seem to be more desirable and reliable than the Hellschreiber machine.

4. The LPS however has its uses. Its items of political comment and feature services are good and useful. These latter we use for translation and submission to the local press and for translation and exhibition in the Information Centre. But as much of the material is timeless the delay of one week or so in receiving the service by bag, as at present, does not matter a great deal. To operate the Hellschreiber would mean an additional burden on the typing staff, for the tape would have to be typed out (copies now arrive already duplicated) and the extra work involved would seem to be altogether unnecessary. To have a means of receiving news, however, which was less laborious than manual monitoring would be a distinct improvement, and the "Sound Mirror" might meet the need; the Hellschreiber, which we have said over and over again would not meet our need, being returned for some post where it could be used.

6. We have gone into the question in great detail with the Ambassador and he has asked us to state that, after reconsideration, he fully agrees with the views expressed in this letter.

Yours ever,  
ER.

INFORMATION OFFICER.

Information Policy Department,

Foreign Office, S.W.1.