Ryecroft, Jordans, nr. Beaconsfield, Bucks.

1/2

June 25th 1952.

Dr. Anton Pannekoek.

Dear Comrade Pannekoek,

Thank you for your letter of June 6th. I had wished to reply at once and am sorry I have not made time to do so until now. I did however write at once to Comrade George Stone, and you will by now, I hope, have received a number of copies of the March 29th "Socialist Leader". I suggested he should send you 12 copies if there were enough remaining in stock; if you require more than you have received, and if we have more in hand, we shall be pleased to send more. He has also sent a copy each to the two Australian comrades.

I am not in regular touch with our Head Office, at Finchley in London, where the "Socialist Leader" is edited (I am 25 miles away here), but I assumed you would have been sent copies direct from there at the time. Comrade Stone says now he has looked it up and 2 copies were posted to you at

the time but apparently these did not reach you.

I did not know you do not see the "Socialist Leader" regularly. We should be only too pleased to send you this every week. I hesitate to do so without your acceptance. since I know you have little extra time for reading; but if you wish I will send you a copy regularly. I have a parcel every week containing more copies than I have regular orders for: and I give the surplus away or leave them in trains, etc.. except when occasionally I have a good chance of selling them at a meeting or street corner, so that ifnI sent you one it would cost me nothing extra except postage, which I should be glad (and able) to meet, in view of your difficulty in sending money out of the country, and it would be only a slight return for the free copies of "Workers' Councils" you have sent us. Wille you let me know whether you would like this, and also whether you would like more than one copy weekly ? Meanwhile I will look up recent issues and if there are any which might be of special interest to you I will send them under separate cover. You will not find the "Socialist Leader" entirely congenial. at the best. It is not limited to expression of our Party policy; and its political range, especially in respect of readers' letters, covers a wide field, rather embarrassingly wide.

With regard to "Workers' Councils" I am sorry to hear of the silence and lack of sales in U.S.A. but, as you say, it is not surprising. I have heen seeing lately "Labor Action", weekly paper of the Independent Socialist League in America, which calls itself a Marxist movement. Though I have not often

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read it very thoroughly, I have found much of it congenial and valuable, especially some of the articles by Max Shachtman, president of the League, and Hal Draper, editor. They ought to have given some space to the book; no doubt M Paul Mattick has sent them copies in the past. It might still be possible to get some publicity through them, perhaps by the use of our March 29th reviews, and I will look into this unless you will do it yourself. You may know their address already; it is:-"Labor Action". 114 West 14 Street, New York City 11, N.Y.
(the figure after New York City is eleven, not test two.)

I have note made any promise or formed any intention of writing a book on workers' councils as the final development of the Socialist struggle, though I should like to try, especially in view of the illuminating indications in your last letter, and earlier letters. But I am far too much immersed at present in "trivial" Party duties. (They are not trivial really because they help to make up the Party's striking force, and with all its faults the I.L.P. is the best we have got in this country.) We are going ahead with the pamphlet I have written to you about; this is now waiting for a first draft from me, and I do not yet see my waynto a definite date for getting that ready; when it is ready I think there is no doubt we shall send: it you for comment.

I did, it is true, ask you about the possibility of a new edition, possibly revised, of "Workers' Councils". In view of your reply, and since there is still a stock of the Australian edition in America, I had considered we should not consider that until the American stock is exhausted. The "Socialist Leader" has had 48 copies in all from Mattick: these are all

sold and the editor has just sent for more.

There has not been any correspondence in the "Socialist Leader" arising out of the March 29th issue. I have some indication from personal contact of a limited welcome for the book, which will spread slowly. Besides Ken Eaton and Jim Graham, Tom Colyer, whom I have mentioned in earlier letters, speaks highly of it. Arising out of it, too, the I.L. P. has invited you to address its summer school in August and I hope you can accept. I had an interesting comment from a member of Common Wealth, Ernie Hartley, who is secretary of the League for Workers' Control, who as an accountant masound has found specially emlightening the chapter partly concerned with public accounting. A local friend who is a member of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, while appreciating much of the book, says it is weak "politically" and promises me a further criticism. Common Wealth is a political party, founded about ten years ago mainly by Sir Richard Acland, previously a Liberal. It was then gave critical support to the war. In the last few years it has swung round much nearer us, shed a number of members (including Acland, who is now a Labour "Left" M. P.) and we now work with it to some extent. Its membership is probably only a few hundred but ours is not so much more than that.

Knew House Western Son

I have not read "New Fabian Essays". From memory, I think it was reviewed unfavourably in the "Socialist Leader" (I will look this up) and I did not incline to read it, in view of my limited time for reading. Allen Skinner (recently editor of "Peace News", a life-long pacifist Socialist and trade union commentator, who has recently joined Common Wealth and is chairman of the League for Workers' Control), lecturing at an I.L. P. week-end school in Hertfordshire ten days ago, said there was nothing of value in it with the possible exception of Cross man's introductory essay.

If you want a copy of this, however, or any other English book at any time, and have difficulty in sending out money for it, if you will write to me I will get the required book and send

it to you.

If you will permit, I will conclude with a prest? brief reference to my personal financial situation, which has some relevance. I think I have mentioned in an earlier letter that when I became a convinced Socialist at the end of 1923, I resigned my job on a Capitalist newspaper in as Sheffield. Since the n I have been of the working class economically as well as spiritually, until a fews months ago; until then I was almost entirely dependent on my see earnings as a jobbing gardener, and these are frequently voluntarily curtailed inthe interests of the I.L. P. After the death of my Mother hast August (my Father having died in 1945) I inherited a considerable amount of capital (about £4000 in value). I had expected this, if I lived longer than my parents, and had always felt that for a man holding my political opinions there would be a strong moral obligation to see that this money went to the workers who earned it. Since the money has reached me, all the advice I have received has been against doing anything of this kind; for example, the largest single holding (25 some £1500 in British Transport stock; and I have been advised that if I tried to distribute even the capital amongat some two million transfort workers, the effect would be only a gesture. I am not convinced, but for the time being I am not doing anything; and I have alreadys compromised to the extent of selling about half the British Transport stock and using most g of the money in donations -- mainly to the I.L.P. -- and using some for my personal requirements. I have no dependents. When I said in an earlier letter that funds might be forth-

coming to finance a prospective English edition of "workers' Councils" I was thinking that a fund might be formed ** and that I might contribute appreciably towards it. However, I do not yet commit myself to anything of the kind, since I am still not fully convinced that I have a moral right, as a Socialist, to use money earned by other men for causes however worthy.

My parents were Quaker missionaries in China and did not make any money. Both my grandfathers were moderately successful tradesmen, and my parents kept their joint inheritance unused (the interest helping the whole family in some degree) and have passed it on to their children. I am not religious myself, perhaps I need not add. Yours fraternally wisham.

FROM: W. S. Wigham. Ryecroft, Jordans, nr. Beaconsfield. Bucks. October 8th 1952. Prof. Dr. Anton Pannekoek. Zeist (Holland), Regentesselaan 8. Dear Comrade Pannekoek, Further to my letter of September 30th, I am now enclosing copy of current "Socialist Leader" containing the second of Don Bateman's two articles on Yugoslavia. I am also able at last to send you for comment a copy of the first draft of the pamphlet which the National Industrial Committee of the I.L.P. is preparing and which we hope will be accepted for publication by the Party in due course. With regard to the draft pamphlet, also enclosed herewith: 2 --1. Please excuse faulty typing. The typewriter I am using for this letter was not then available: I am hoping to buy the present typewriter at second-hand rate. 2. We are proposing at present to issue a short account of your career as an appendix (but see below.4). This is based on the notes prepared by Ken Eaton for the March 29th "Socialist Leader" review of "Workers' Councils" but I have corrected the two mistakes you pointed out in that. Will you suggest any other alterations or additions? I have already had a suggestion from another member of our N.I.C. that your date of birth should be included. (I know it within a year, of course, since you told me a few months ago you were 79.) I suggest altering the openingmof the appendix to read: -- "Dr. Anton Pannekoek, who is now a Professor of Astronomy in Holland, was born in Before the first World War Anton Pannekoek played an active part ..." 3. Section V, beginning on page 32 of typescript, deals mainly with "Workers' Councils". There is at least one important omission due to my haste in the final preparation: that is, there should have been at least a brief reference to one or more of the other forms of struggle which were being developed, especially, in my opinion, the "stay-in strike" as we call it. I hope this alteration will be accepted by the Committee. Although it is this Section on which we should especially like your comment, we should certainly also welcome opinion on the reast of the pamphlet: which needs considerable improvement in any case in its presentation and which need not retain its present title. P.T.O.

4. Most of this pamphlet draft was written by myself, but the first Section (first three pages) was written by Jim Graham and the part of Section IV dealing with North America by Tom Colyer. The whole N.I.C. will be responsible for the final draft and after that it will be considered for publication by the Party. I cannot therefore anticipate either how far your comments can be accepted or how far the pamphlet will retain its present form, apart from your comments, or indeed, whether it will be published at all.

With these provisos, I still hope you will be able to make some comment, and I and I think most of the Committee,

are assured it will be valuable.

5. I have some misgivings in sending you the draft now, since according to your earlier time-table you might be at a crucial stage in preparing the American edition of your book on Astronomy. All I can say the is that if and when you can deal with this draft, we shall welcome a reply as soon as you can manage it.

With fraternal greetings,

Wilfred Wigham

Ryecroft, Jordans, nr. Beaconsfield, Bucks.

Anton Pannekoek.

October 29th 1952.

Dear Comrade Pannekoek,

Thank you for your letter of October 23rd and thank you on behalf of the I.L.P. National Industrial Committee for dealing so thoroughly with the first draft of the pamphlet on trade unions and workers' councils.

We will of course alter the mistaken references in the

biographical note.

I think when we considered the first draft we were partly aware of the fault in the exposition to which you draw attention: that the transition from the present day to workers' councils is tooks sudden. When our Committee met, since I wrote to you, we decided on a number of amendments which mostly had the object of amplifying the description of the present role of trade unions. These are now being considered; and I think Tom Colyer and I, who will make the final draft for this Committee, will find your letter extremely helpful. (Incidentally, the final draft will be submitted by our Committee to the General Secretary and will then be considered by the Party's Literature Committee, which will recommend publication or not to the National Administrative Council, of which these Committees are sub-committees: so the process is slow, a penalty of democracy.)

At the same time as these amplifying amendments, since the whole pamphlet even without them was longer than we had originally anticipated or than was likely to be effective, I have been authorised to make fairly severe cuts in the historical

sections.

I feel sure that the final draft we submit will be much

better and more convincing than the first draft.

I have not been sending you the "Socialist Leader" regularly, only a few special issues now and then; I have twice offered, the first time some months ago, to send it you regularly, but as you did not specifically reply, I did not want to overburden you with such reading matter (I spend far too much time reading papers and not enough reading books!) However, in view of your reference in your letter, I will now send the S.L. regularly, beginning with the issue of November 1st, due out tomorrow; I will send at printed matter rate and will expect you to inform me if you do not receive them regularly, or alternatively if at some time in the future you no longer wish to received them. This will be at no cost to yourself, naturally; I have surplus

copies sent me each week.

I have not referred to your comment on the title page, but I think there is no doubt we can alter that to meet your objections, with which I now agree.

Please excise short letter; I have merely wished to acknowledge yours and let you know how we are getting on with

the pamphlet but once again thank you very much.

Yours sincerely,

(Chairman, I.L.P. National Gindustrial Committee) P.S. After hesitation; for I do not want to treshase too much on your limited time, I have decided to send you cohies of the Suggested amendments referred to above, These need not be returned. They will not necessarily be included as they stand now; for example there is some duplication on industrial unionism; and the amendment in parts bage 42 probably goes too for regard foresent 1.L.P. policy.



Prof. Dr. A. Pannekoek. Zeist, Regentesselaan 8. Holland

Ryecroft, Jordans, nr. Beaconsfield, Bucks.

Prof. Dr. Anton Pannekoek.

September 29th 1953. (posted Sept, 30th).

Dear Comrade Pannekoek,

Further to my letter of September 16th: since then I have been in correspondence and telephonic communication with George Stone about the matters you raised in your last letter of September 8th. I am sorry there has been delay due to my lack of time, but I have now written to R. E. Johnson, for the Libertarian Socialist League, by air mail, asking him to inform George Stone how many copies he wants of "Workers' Gouncils".

George Stone has sent my copy of "Anthropogenesis" to one of his regular book reviewers: as the reviewer will want a copy to keep, presumably, and I shall want mine back, could you send a review copy to George Stone? (Editor, "Socialist Leader".

318 Regents Park Road, Finchley, London. N. 3.)

I don't think George Stone has made any use of the information about Malaya you sent. I have to try to concentrate on the trade union side myself and am not too well informed on anti-Imperialist events, so that I doubt whether I could write it up adequately in the way you suggest. Tom Colyer is one of our members perhaps best informed in this sphere, but he has had a health breakdown not long ago and we have to be careful not to overwork him; however, I will consult him about it. (I am not, of course, uninterested, or unaware of its importance! I attended and reported for the "Socialist Leader" a most interesting and instructive lecture on the Gold Coast the week-end before last: organised by the London I.L.P.) I was unable for personal reasons to attend the London conference last week-end on Africa but the I.L.P. was well represented and it will be reported in the S.L.

We do not hope for very much from the Labour Party Conference which is taking place this week at Margate.

With fraternal greetings,

Yours sincerely,

Wilfred S. Wigham.

103/8

Prof. Dr. Anton Pannekoek.

Ryecroft, Jordans, nr. Beaconsfield, Bucks.

January 6th 1954. (posted Jan. 7th)

Dear Comrade Pannekoek,

For a long time I have wondered whether the I.L.P. could print as a pamphlet a chapter of your book, "Workers' Councils": Section II, Chapter 6, entitled "Workers' Revolution", pages 19 to 108 of the Melbourne edition.

During the 1952-53 I.L.P. year (Faster to Faster) I was Chairman of the Party's National Industrial Committee and I suggested this to the Secretary, Tom Colyer: he was quite in favour but did not put it before the Committee that year. During the 1953-54 Party year I am Secretary of the N.I.C. and at its first meeting, in August, I put this florward as a definite proposal. The members had not all read the book, and there had to be some that delay because of that, but after a month or two I got complete agreement on the proposal. There is a qualification that we are a sub-committee of the National Administrative Council and formally any action we affire is subject to N.A.C. endorsement.

Any such publication will be of course subject to your approval. I had not written you before because I intended at first to copy out the chapter and make some verbal alterations (I will explain this in a moment). I undertook to do this on behalfs of the N.I.C. and have started doing it, but it will be at least ten days before it is ready to send you, probably, and I have now decided to write you in advance, partly because I want to write about one or two other matters.

Although all members of the Committee approved in general of publication, three suggested an attempt should be made to alter some phrasing which is difficult at first glance. You will remeber, perhaps, when I wrote to you about the book after I first read it, I raised this point. There is not, to my knowledgem any faulty English in the translation; but there are here and there phrases and words used in a sense not usual, which might worry some readers. It is difficult to explain without giving actual examples, and that is partly why I intended at first to delay writing you until I could send you the typescript with the alterations I was suggesting. One example that occurs to me is the use of the word! "foreign", in the sense of "atter": this is very a rare in current usage except in certain phrases such as the surgical "foreign body"; "alien" is however more often used in that sense.

In every case the alterations I suggest will aim at leaving the meaning unchanged.

I do not think it is worth while your writing in reply *
until you have received from me the typescript of the chapter;
but will you keep this letter until then and refer to it.

writing

* on this matter (but see marked passages on page 3)

We shall want to know then: --

1- Do you agree to the publication as a pamphlet?

2. Would you want payment ?

3. Agreement with (1) is subject to approval or correction by you of the suggested alterations. Would you agree to leave to our Committee

(a) an Introduction -- which I have suggested would be prepared by Ken Raton and myselfme -- giving a brief account of the book from which the chapter is taken and of the author.

I have not raised with the Committee the possibility of your writing an Introduction yourself, but if there was any chance of your doing so, it would probably be preferable.

(b) a possible title to the pamphlet differing from the title of the Chapter in the book.

(c) possible sub-headings, occurring probably at the space-breaks in the printed copy.

(d) format and price.

4. Would there be any prospect of translation into other languages sizes if the proposal is carried out? We should have in mind possible American sales in any case.

That is all I can think of which until I send you the taped chapter itself. It is to a large extent self-contained and I am strongly in favour of this plan; and of course we should have the hope that it would lead to firther readers of the whole book.

I think I have told you in an earlier letter that when I heard from you about the Libertarian Socialist League in California wanting copies of "Workers' Councils", I wrote tom them, by arrangement aks with George Stone, Editor of the "Socialist Leader", I think on October 28th, asking them to write direct to Comrade Stone telling him how many they wanted. Although I sent my letter by air mail, there was no reply for a long time; but I am glad to say that in a letter to me dated December 15th, Comrade Stone said he had just heard from them that they wanted 20 copies and he was going to send them.

The arrangement George Stone made with Paul Mattick when Comrade Mattick sent his stock of the book to us was that he would pay an instalment of the total cost at once and the balance he could not promise before they were all sold. I understand Comrade Stone is hoping to send the balance in any case; although there must still be some 40 or 50 copies remaining in the hands of the "Socialist Leader".

The slow sale of the book makes it unlikely that we should be justified in republishing it -- which at one time, as you know, I was thinking of -- unless for some reason the demand increases.

I.L.P.

Monthly

Bulletin

(4)



WORKERS' CONTROL

N 1936 property owners and industrialists fled from parts of Spain which the Republic had been able to hold against the rebellion of the Army under Franco. The result was not chaos. The workers—factory workers, transport workers and land workers—turned up for the job and got on with it. They were soon doing the jobs more successfully than they had been done before.

"What else shall ye lack when ye lack masters?" asked William Morris. That is the challenge thrown down by the slogan of WORKERS' CONTROL. If we can do the job ourselves, why should outsiders make a living out of our work, order us about, and allow the tempo and conditions of the work to be governed by their need to make a profit out of it?

Objections are raised. How exactly can it be done? Who will be the managers? How will you deal with nation-wide and even international trusts and monopolies?

The difficulties lie in the monstrous set-up which has grown out of capitalist-based and capitalist-inspired society, not in its converse. Workers' control is warp and woof of Socialism, that is of a fairly and reasonably ordered society

Although workers' control is a natural and not an artificial method for the factory and for machine-production in general, we cannot hope that the artificial financial interests and profit-making system will destroy themselves. For a few individuals they provide privilege, power, and a kind of freedom. Those will not surrender that power of their own free will: their spurious political philosophers have even morally justified it for them.

Production will have to be taken out of their hands. That means a social revolution and political action to bring it about.

But the understanding that all workers by hand or brain are the rightful directors of the country's economic life, and the effort to win such workers' control, will keep political aspiration down to the ground and give it a realistic impetus.

Nationalisation, in the form in which it has been introduced so far in Britain, removes private owners from separate concerns but continues to pay them for ever a rake-off out of their former industry or service. It also rationalises and symbolises the large-scale bureaucratic centralisation of economic power. A few former trade union leaders on national boards at £5,000 a year do not constitute workers' control.

Centralisation need be statistical only. The need for shoes in any community could be estimated and the shoe factories run to meet that need. New factories might be needed. There would have to be national decisions made on what industries most needed new factories or equipment, and priorities allocated accordingly.

Those decisions should be made by representatives of all the workers in all industries: who are the nation's producers *and* consumers.

Those representatives, whether elected direct or through separate industries, need not be paid at more than workmen's wages. Theirs is not a directly productive job, though an interesting and necessary one.

All the actual useful production would be done as it is now, but under conditions which the workers would see were congenial, with pay which allowed them a real life. There would be no non-working directors or shareholders. Managers would be elected from below. In small units the general policy on how the factory or service was run would be decided at meetings of all the workers. In larger units delegates from all departments would form workers' councils, responsible to all the workers.

In the setting up of enterprises there is much skilled work, implying technical education. It is all done by workers: not by shareholders as such or sleeping directors.

Under workers' control, all the workers would take an interest in the whole enterprise. Interchangeability of jobs, minimising boredom, would become practicable. The work-life as well as the leisure life of the "common people" would become satisfying and spiritually healthy.

* * * * *

If you would like more information about worker's control and the I.L.P.'s political programme, write to:

JOHN McNAIR (Gen. Sec., I.L.P.), 318 Regents Park Road, Finchley, London, N.3

All organised workers should read:

TRADE UNIONIST'S NOTEBOOK

which appears fortnightly in the

THE SOCIALIST LEADER

(THE I.L.P. WEEKLY)

3d.

Obtainable from your newsagent, your local I.L.P. branch and from 48 Dundas Street, Glasgow, C.I.

I drew your attention -- by writing the page number at the top of the front page of the December 26th "Socialist Leader" -- to an advertisement of "Workers' Councils" in that issue. Comrade Stone has agreed to my xx suggestion that he should put in such an advertisement of your book about once a month. My idea is to have a different appreciation of the book quoted from each time: as you will have seen, the first was from Jim Graham's S.L. review (in the March 29th issue, 1952). Can you send me some similar short expressions of appreciation of the book: from any source which might make an impression on the minds of our readers ? I can use an extract from my own review in a later advert. but for the next one or two we should like to use some outside appreciations -- not necessarily English, a translation of a continental review, for example, would be all right, but remember we in England are somewhat ill informed on Continental politics!

As I told you in a letter at the time, I was impressed by the information about Malaya in the cutting you copied out for me in a letter a few months ago, from the "Manchester Guardian", which I had missed when it appeared; I found the M.G. croott and sent it to Tom Colyer, who is one of the best informed on colonial matters. Perhaps unfortunately, Tom decided to investigate it thoroughly, and when I last spoke to him about it, he was still trying to get from His Majesty's Stationery Office the full document of which

the M.G. editorial was commenting.

I am enclosing, attached, a copy of a monthly bulletin, on "Workers' Control", which I wrote for the I.L.P., and

which I hope is worth reading.

I am sorry no review has appeared yet of your book on the origin of man, in the S.L. I know Comrade Stone has been trying one or two reviewers who might be qualified and so far as I have heard he has not yet got a review sent in; as he is using my copy, I have had no further opportunity of reading the book myself, and in any case I doubt whether I have sufficient knowledge to review at properly and I am somewhat immersed in the industrial side of our activity in any case.

I sent you by printed matter post the Autumn number of "The Socialist Christian" with an article by J. Henry Lloyd (a veteran Guild Socialist) which dealt somewhat slightingly with our pamphlet, "The Changing Structure of Trade Unions," and your ideas as they appeared in that that pamphlet. I do not think this paper has a big circulation; if you had time to write in reply, briefly, I expect they would publish it. The Autumn issue reached me very late, through someone else's carelessness. If you have not time to reply to the criticism perhaps I could do so, in time for the Shring issue.

I must not write more, but I hope your health remains good and that this year will see an advance towards workers' knowledge of their opportunity. I hope you will read my article in the forthcoming (Jan. 9th. Wilfred Wigham.

FROME Wilfred S. Wigham. Ryecroft, Jordans, nr. Beaconsfield, Bucks. Prof. Dr. Anton Pannekoek. September 16th 1953. Dear Comrade Pannekoek, Thank you for your letter of September 8th. In regard to the copies of "Workers' Councils", I did write to you at the time, some months ago, to inform you that the editor of the "Socialist Leader" (Cde. George Stone) had purchased the bulk of the remaining copies at of the book which were held by Cde. Paul Mattick. (I was not sure from correspondence of George Stone whether Cde. Mattick had kept any copies; it is unfortunate that he did not keep a few. I am sending your letter on to Cde. Stone; I am not sure of the exact figures myself, but I think about 80 copies were sent by Cde. Mattick, and these arrived safely. Unfortunately, in spite of the references to and quotations from the book in our pamphlet, sales have remained very slow; when the stock was received from Cde. Mattick, it was announced in the "Socialist Leader" that copies were again available. Regarding the request from the comrade in California, either Cde. Stone or I will write you again after he has had an opportunity to read your letter. Yes, I had been thinking myself that we should get a review of your book, "Anthropogenesis", but the delay in suggesting this to the Editor has been my fault, because of the difficulty I mentioned to you when I acknowledged the book, of finding time for reading; however, I am now suggesting to Cde. Stone that he considers publishing a review, by someone else, and if necessary my copy will be made available. Thank you also for drawing our attention to and copying out the striking report on rice production abuses in Malaya; I amy passing this also on to to Cde. Stone in case he has not seen it. I was at the I.L.P. Summer School for two weeks in the first half of August; this was not a complete holiday from I.L.P. work, but otherwise a holiday and very enjoyable. The lecturers included Lard Boyd Orr and the President of the National Union of Railwaymen (Franklin). This does not mean that the I.L.P. accepts the political attitude of either! Yours sincerely, Wilfred Wigham.