

L.J. Wackett,  
C/o North American Aviation,  
Inglewood, Inc.  
California.

12th March, 1937.

Dear Brown,

After nearly 4 weeks of worry I have finally got the Licence with North American. I found them in a hectic state. They were just in the last throes of turning out a new bomber, and the strain of the last few months had tried everyone's nerves to the limit. The factory was disorganised, and has been largely restored to normal during the last fortnight. Simultaneously with our arrival there were official visits by committees of Army and Naval officers who demanded preference. Also there are negotiations afoot with Turks, Swedes, Argentines and Mr. Fokker.

To cap all the whole industry has been upset by a wave of strikes. These affected the Douglas plant, but by strenuous efforts and numerous conferences with leaders of the men it was avoided here. They are in for lots of trouble in the future with industrial unionism, as they are well behind us in these matters.

However, I got into conference with Kindleberger on every possible occasion, and spent the rest of the time studying the plant and getting out machinery requirements. These I have now settled as regards the metal working plant. I still have the miscellaneous section, Heat Treatment, etc., and will do that during the next week.

After Lawler & Felix and N.A.A.'s lawyers had both had their cut at the agreement it finally evolved to final form which I think is what we wanted and what is more, as much as we can get at the price.

I had great difficulty in getting some short but precise way of defining the aeroplane, and the scheme I have adopted meets the case and is the only practical one at present. N.A.A. are a bit behind hand with the latest amended drawings. We are lucky to have waited till now as the amended drawings contain lots of minor improvements which the Army found necessary by experience with the planes in use. I have made inquiries and find that the plane is very highly thought of by the Army. It will be ordered in large numbers and particularly in the improved military version.

I was glad the Board decided to order two models. From tests with the Northrup plane with geared and direct drive Wasps as alternatives a much bigger margin of improvement was shown than that shown in the N.A.A. specifications. N.A.A. have not yet had their flying tests on the retractile undercarriage, but these will take place next week and we will get the benefit of this before ours is built. I have great hopes that the new version with all improvements and built in bomb racks and releases will appeal to the Air Board as a useful weapon.

After considering all things, I decided to instruct

Carroll to come to Los Angeles first. He can see the machine shop here, the installation of the Wasp in the NA.16, can go to the Menasco engine factory, and I have arranged for him to go to the Pratt & Whitney Service Depot here for a couple of days, and finally there is a big aero show here next week, and he can see some fine exhibits of engines and accessories before going east with me.

I will go east at the end of the month after getting Bruce and Smith properly installed here. Air is studying the job O.K., and will know all about it by the time I return.

I have not got hold of a good Factory Manager fellow yet, but hope to soon. Men from here will be hard to get. We may do better to get men from England. Incidentally I got hold of a former man of mine, an Australian, now in the Bristol Factory in England. He wrote me here. He is ideal, and I can strongly recommend him for Technical Assistant for the Aircraft Factory. Will write later on, when I have further details from him. I feel sure he is a good find and we should get him. McCorquodale by name.

When the machinery lists I have sent have been looked into I hope to get authority to order some of the items listed for procurement here. I strongly advise the 500 ton press with the overhead cylinder. This is the most important item for a modern aircraft factory. It costs more than we really need for a start, but looking ahead, and on the best advice, I think we ought to get the larger unit.

I just received a letter from Mr. W.S. Robinson written on Jan. 20, in which he hoped to get advice from me before I sailed. Let him know through Sir Colin that I did not get it till Mar. 12.

Hope everything is going O.K. Remember me to Mr. Darling and the other Directors, and to Harrison. Hope they are all well.

Kind regards to yourself.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) L.J. WACKETT.

Copy sent to -

H.G. Darling  
Essington Lewis  
Sir Lennon Raws  
Sir Colin Fraser  
L.J. Hartnett  
M.L. Baillieu  
D.L. Dowdell

F.M. Mitchell  
W.S. Robinson  
L. Bradford.

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

12th April, 1937.

Dear Sir,

I enclose herewith copy of letter dated 12th March received this morning from Mr. Wackett, reviewing generally the progress of negotiations in America.

I also append cable dated 9th April received this morning from Mr. Wackett, which is self-explanatory:-

"Inglewood, California.

Leaving by air for New York morning tenth  
cable address care North American Aviation  
1775 Broadway."

Yours faithfully,

Secretary.

Enc: Copy of letter  
AGB/TK.