

22nd March 1961

Dear Hagen:

A few months ago I returned to this part of the world. Presently I am organizing some new and more elaborate experiments to measure low frequency cosmic static. The next few years should be increasingly auspicious for this kind of observations.

As you know, I spent most of last summer at Green Bank. My mission there was to complete the reconstruction of my old Wheaton radio telescope. This was finally accomplished in good order. The time and cost involved was at least an order of magnitude greater than my original effort at Wheaton.

The purpose of this letter is to discuss another topic, namely the 140 ft. dish. The project seems to have been undertaken as some kind of a prestige affair. Due to the gross incompetence of Berkner and Emberson the project has degenerated into a laughing stock item at places like Radio Physics. I can assure you that its prestige value is less than zero.

The situation at Green Bank has reached a complete impasse. Radio astronomy there will never recover from the effects of Berkner and Emberson until the 140 ft. dish is somehow resolved. It is just barely conceivable the thing might be finished; altho I seriously doubt it, even if ten more years and unlimited funds were expended. Even if it were finished today, its scientific worth would be close to zero. Something has to be done. I propose to try pulling a few strings and attempt to get the project killed. If this can be accomplished and some new and effective management installed, then the way should be open to give radio astronomy at Green Bank a new lease on life.

I don't know if you want to dirty your hands with this thing, but if so, maybe you can help. I may estimate the situation wrongly. However, it is my observation that the people at NSF have become so involved in this project in an emotional way that they are no longer capable to rational judgement. Any corrective action must come from the outside of NSF. It is my hope that the new administration now in office will have sufficient back bone to clean up this mess. Any comments and suggestions you wish to make will be much appreciated by me and kept confidential.

You might be interested to know that I found a doctor over at Charlottesville who seemed to know his stuff. I had him do a bit of an operation on my right ear and now my hearing in this ear has returned to within 5 percent of normal. I had long ago forgotten all the noises most people are surrounded with!

Best regards,

Grote Reber
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