

No Wild Scheme from Mars— *page 1* But Planned Scientific Experiment

BY "INQUISITOR"

Not a wild scheme for hearing from Mars, nor a new kind of radio station, but a well-planned scientific experiment explains the rotund steel skeleton that stands 20 feet high in the Reber yard at 212 W. Seminary avenue.

Grote Reber, graduate student in physics at the University of Chicago, had the complicated receiving apparatus erected to aid in his study of static. Its main purpose is to serve as a receiving unit for static waves coming from outside our own atmosphere.

These impulses interfere with radio and telephone communication. In the case of radio reception, much of the disturbance in the old sets was caused by faulty connections, unshielded wires, and defects in equipment. However, careful search and continued improvement enabled radio engineers to build receivers in which there were no defects, receivers that advance tests indicated should have been perfect. But still there was static.

Come from Outside

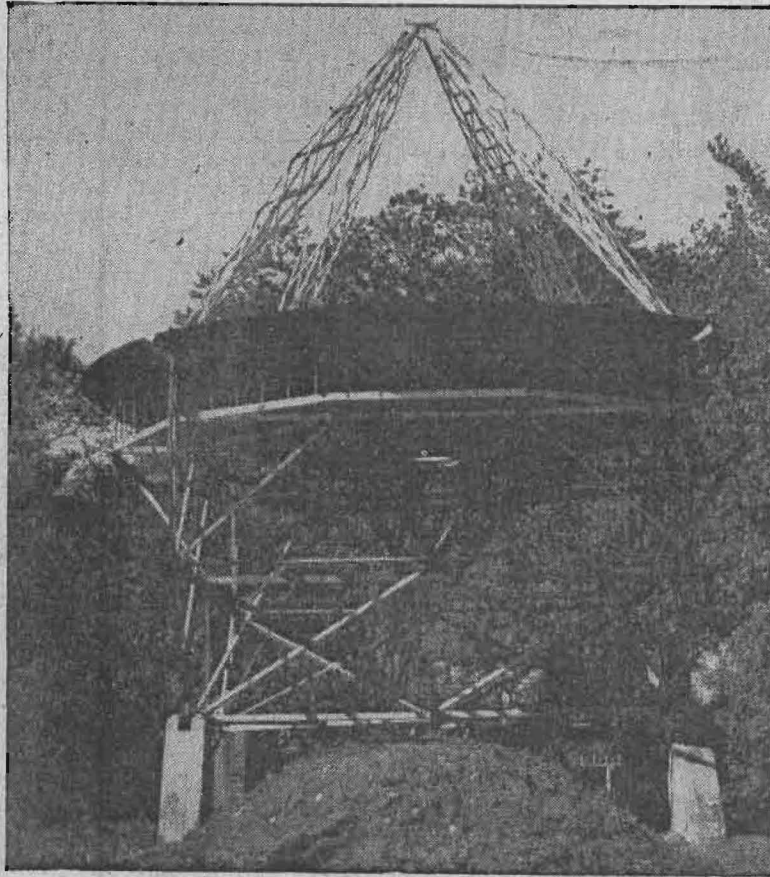
Then technicians working on the trans-Atlantic telephone reported unexpected difficulties. They encountered noises and interruptions origin of which could not be traced to any known agency, natural or of man's invention. They concluded that it must be waves, but of some new variety.

So the Bell Telephone laboratories started an investigation to determine the source of these waves. They found that the disturbing elements came from outside our universe. At first it was thought that these extra terrestrial waves come from the sun but subsequent checkings did not confirm the idea. Later the Milky Way was suspected as a source of the waves but definite proof was lacking.

Last summer Mr. Reber built his receiving apparatus to join in the hunt for the wandering waves. The complicated mechanism measures the strength and intensity of the incoming static impulses at various times of the day or night and at various seasons of the year. The resultant data is automatically recorded on a meter. Later the scientist checks and studies the results.

Covers Entire Sky

An ingenious application of laws of movement has enabled Mr. Reber to cover the entire sky systematically. The mirror, frame, and recording apparatus are mounted on two long girders, curved like an inverted rocker. The whole framework can be moved, on these rockers, over an arc in a north and south direction.



It works like this: the receiving mechanism is locked in one position on the rockers. Then the east to west rotation of the earth during each 24-hour period swings the reflector, anchored on the moving earth, over a single longitudinal lane of the sky.

By changing the position of the framework and repeating this process again and again and checking the number or intensity of the waves at each position, eventually the scientist hopes to locate their source.

30 Feet in Diameter

With a diameter of 30 feet, the concave, sheet-iron reflector focuses the static waves upwards to a delicate receiving outfit, rather like that used in a radio, where they are recorded. The structure is approximately 20 feet high and is solidly mounted upon cement pillars.

Mr. Reber is planning to change the frequency which he is using in the work from 900,000 kilocycles to 20,000 kilocycles. For purposes of comparison, Radio Station WMAQ operates on a frequency of 670 kilocycles.

Personally, the experimenter is quite modest. Perhaps he dispairs of explaining his equipment to the

non-technical laymen but at any rate he refuses to be drawn into any lengthy discussion of his ideas or plans. "When I get some news I'll let you know," was his quiet answer to a reporter's queries.

Has Own Theory

Last week he spoke before the Radio club at Wheaton college on "Extra Terrestrial Waves," explaining in some detail the possibilities and theories behind his search for the static waves. Refusing to give any definite commitment, Mr. Reber admitted that he has a theory of his own, somewhat different from those advanced previously.

One member of his audience contributed the latest story concerning an outsider's reaction to the strange looking apparatus. An airplane flying west from Chicago performed well until it came over Wheaton, where the motor began to misfire and almost stopped. The pilot had heard of the unusual piece of machinery in the town and, looking down, saw it below him about the time his motor began to sputter. As soon as the plane got beyond Wheaton it again functioned perfectly but the pilot reported to the airport that there was a "motor stopper" in Wheaton that should be investigated.

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