

3rd October 1956  
G.P.O., Hobart  
Tasmania, Australia

Mr. B. E. Rathje  
Rathje & Woodward  
203 East Liberty Drive  
Wheaton, Illinois

Dear Bert:

Last July I wrote to you regarding the disposition of property held mutually by my brother Schuyler and me. At the time, I had the rather naive expectation that by agreeing to his various terms the matter would be closed up promptly. Unfortunately it seems that the subject still drags along in an indeterminate manner. Recently I have received two letters dated the 24th and 25th of September respectively from him and his wife. They are of such an emotional nature and some of the contents rather an insult to my intelligence that I presently see no profit in attempting to answer them immediately. Consequently, I have decided to bother you about things which are probably only of minor interest to you. At the risk of making you bored, I will undertake to recite a bit of history.

As you know, I was in Wheaton a couple of weeks in December and a few days in February. At the time Schuyler was planning to change his job and it appeared he would only be living in Wheaton a few months longer. It was agreed that when he no longer needed the house, it was to be moved and the land sold. Since nothing could be done until he made up his mind what he was going to do, I left matters in his hands with the understanding he would keep me advised of progress. At the time it seemed that the land was worth about 15000 to 17000 dollars on a market of about three possible customers. At no time over the several years he has lived in the house, have I pressed him to make any change as I had no need of the funds represented therein.

After I get down here again I receive news that IBT is willing to pay about twice what anyone else will, and that the house is going to be moved. This is very fine, so I request the papers be sent down here and also make specific inquiry about the moving of the house, who, where, when, how much, etc. as the day may arrive when I would like to come back to Wheaton and live in the place again.

At the time he seems very annoyed that I make these inquiries and tells me that there is big money to be made in moving it, which on the face of it is absurd. Also if I want the house, I must pay him 3500 dollars for his share and he will not supply me with any information or be of any assistance. As an

alternative he offers me 1000 dollars for my equal share. Such, to me, seems a bit inequitable arrangement and rather peculiar pay for having been allowed the free use of the place for several years. While thinking this one over, I receive another letter saying that if I don't choose one of the above alternatives and sign the contract with IBT by a certain date, he was going to start court action along with a variety of other unpleasantness.

At the time, I did not wish to get involved in a law suit, so I chose to sell my half of the house and garage for 1000 dollars. This was the substance of my last letter to you. Also I enclosed a signed copy of the IBT contract. Nothing more was heard about the house until last month I received some more papers with request to sign. These were not at all according to his prescription of last July which he pressed upon me with great urgency. I wrote to him pointing out this fact and suggested that he have proper papers drawn up, which I would sign promptly. In reply, about all he now has to offer is to let the house be town down by default, which is precisely the situation I told him last April that I would object to.

Thru all of his letters runs a continual reiteration that all of his troubles are my fault. It has begun to irritate me as most of his troubles are obviously of his own making; mainly thru bad judgment, mismanagement and lack of foresight; particularly in not early securing an option on a piece of land to move the house which he was so avid to obtain last spring.

After receiving his last letter my initial impulse was to have him brought before a court and charged with incompetence and mismanagement of our mutual affairs. However the sums involved are not great and I still dislike publicity before a vicarious audience. On the other hand I do believe that because of his past actions and/or lack thereof, he should be made to toe the line and carry out his proposition which he so urgently pressed upon me and which I entered into in good faith. If he has to invest some money in the house, it will give him an incentive to see that it is taken care of and not demolished as mere expediency. Since it seems unprofitable for me to write any further letters I would much appreciate your using your good offices to convince him of the error of his ways and that I really do in fact want to see the house preserved.

In regard to the IBT contract there is one subject therein which I did not like but in view of the pressure from my brother it did not seem worth arguing about then. I wrote to Schuyler about it but he has seen fit to ignore the matter. Contained in the contract is a paragraph which says that after IBT has secured possession of the property it may conduct a survey to

determine the size of the land. If the land is found to be less than 60 ft. by 100 ft. IBT reserves the right to turn the property back to us and we must refund the money. As you can see this has a distinct time bomb effect. The particular piece in question is the last piece sold out of a large parcel. Thus all the irregularities and discrepancies in the large parcel will ultimately find their way into this small piece. I am certain the property is not a rectangle of 60 x 100 and am of the strong opinion that it is a bit short on at least one and perhaps more sides. There is no possibility of us delivering more land than we own. Thus I request that IBT now promptly make their survey before the property is turned over them and advise us of their satisfaction or rejection; or else delete from the contract the particular paragraph about this matter.

Returning again to the house. During the occupancy of my brother it received a minimum of attention, so it is rather run down inside. This was a source of disappointment to me on my last visit as the place received good care while our mother was alive. However it is very well built and merely needs some internal rehabilitation and fixing of the external trim. Furthermore its cubical shape provides a rather large volume for the overall size. For the same reason it heats well in the winter. This is a good house, far better than many put on the market today for large sums. Unfortunately Schuyler had little interest in the place during the past several years and now he appears only desirous of extracting the greatest amount of money in the shortest possible time. However there are still some responsibilities which should be taken care of as follows.

In one of the last letters I am informed "that the house still stands in its former location looking dismal and forlorn". This makes me feel very sad as I always felt pleasantly toward that place and I can just imagine how it must be after several months of total neglect. Please have a handyman or gardener go over and cut the grass, clear up the rubbish, wash the windows on the outside at least down stairs and put the property in respectable appearance.

The insurance may or may not have run out. Please continue or reinstate both the property and public liability insurance for another year.

Cold weather is coming. Please send a plumber promptly to drain all the water out of both the hot and cold systems so that damage will not occur later in the year when it gets very cold.

The taxes have not been paid. This is a disgrace. Please pay them.

The money for the handyman, plumber and insurance I will donate in the interests of responsibility and respectability.

The money for the taxes I will advance, to be recovered by me when the property is finally disposed of. I dislike to bother you about these things, but my brother seems to have lost all interest.

This has been a long letter which has not exhausted the subject. No mention has been made of a variety of private property he still has in his custody. By this omission I in no way agree to let that matter go by default.

Again, I am sorry to bore you with all this kind of thing, but you can better understand why last spring I cancelled that power of attorney and stated I wanted to know what was going to happen before and not afterwards on matters.

Your comments and suggestions will be much appreciated after you have had a chance to contact IBT and to interview my brother. If this letter hadn't been already so long I would tell you about my experiments down here. They are beginning to become quite interesting. This time the radiation is picked up by two wires swung between hills across a valley nearly  $3/4$  mile wide. However when this is over I think I will come back to U.S.A. and stay.

Sincerely yours,

*Grote Reber*  
Grote Reber