

18th July 1956

Dear Schuyler:

I'm sorry that I caused you a lot of unnecessary anxiety. My main difficulty was swallowing the idea of disposing of the old place. However now that neither of us have a need of the place; it is better that it pass into the hands of someone who can use it.

Also it is apparent that the third paragraph of my recent letter is unnecessarily demanding. If you lugged all that big furniture to Louisville, you must have thought you could use it. That is quite alright with me as it is better for you to be using it than merely sitting in a warehouse. I'm mainly interested that it is not busted up or thrown out, that I know where it is and can get a hold of it if I might want it some time. The large dining room table in a suitable size house must be a better thing with several youngsters.

Cheer up! At no time did I think you were a crook. The worst I thought you might be a fool. There were a couple of things about that affair which looked peculiar if not dubious. However I'm satisfied that you did OK. I've not had much time to think about these things as a lot of other matters close at hand have kept me busy.

This country is still running on an economy of scarcity. Everything is in short supply. The whole affair is aided and abetted by the merchants who can keep a minimum of stock. Getting some steel cable was a major operation. Finally I contacted the head major-domo of the Australian Wire Rope Works Ltd in Melbourne and explained the whole sorry mess to him. Then, lo and behold, my special wire rope arrived down here by air from Newcastle just 22 days after placing the order. Needless to say, this was amazing to the local jokers who gave out promises of 8 or 9 months.

Now I have two east-west antennas each 2200 feet long and 300 feet high. They are the center parts of spans between hills respectively 3660 and 3920 feet long. The main span of the Hudson River Bridge is only 3500 feet. Yesterday I tested out their electrical performance and found them to be within 2.5% of mechanical design. This small error may be easily corrected electrically.

Last week we got the underground part of the installation completed. It was a terrific mess. This year has been exceptionally wet. During the first six months, more than the normal annual rainfall came down and the wet season is just getting underway. As the farmer says "This mud is enough to drive a man nuts". At one place we ploughed a trench 500 feet long up a small slope. The water seeped out of the soil all along the trench so that at the bottom of trench the flow was six inches wide and three inches deep. Most of the time the creek in the bottom of the valley is impassable so it was necessary to lay down tiles and put in several truck loads of boulders for a crossing. At the crest of a 370 feet high hill we dug a trench about 1½ ft deep to bury a log as an anchor. In half an hour the trench had a quarter of an inch of water in bottom. Everything is just saturated. Because of all these delays, no results are yet in hand but I am still hopeful.

If everything turns out reasonably as expected then I intend to do this experiment in a bigger and better way some where else. Theory seems to indicate that the magnetic latitude should be reasonably high, say 60 degrees or more (Hobart is at 72 degrees magnetic latitude) In order to get the long wires necessary one is limited to finding suitable valleys, canyons etc. They must be without trees because if there are many trees it is impossible to get the wires up and cutting down even long thin strips in forests is expensive in time and money. In Tasmania there are plenty of valleys but also huge forests.

Recently one of the lumber companies located on its property a new record for the largest hardwood tree known to be in existence It is a huge gum wood 332 feet high which lacks only a few feet of the height of the largest redwood in California. Since there are still large tracts of forest land which have only been looked at in a cursory fashion, it seems probably that in time the worlds largest tree may still be found here. This hardwood is beautiful stuff which looks much like maple. It is used for everything from furniture to telephone poles. However the grain is short and it does not make good paper unless about 15% of long fibre soft pine wood is included. Nearly all the paper for use in the country is made in Tasmania.

This morning the top of Mount Wellington was really white alover for the first time this year. Usually a small amount of snow may be seen in streaks of white but now there must be several feet of snow at the top. People come down here from the mainland for skiing of which there is ample opportunity. Actually the climate is rather mild. Zero temperatures are unknown even in the interior. A couple of days ago it was 23°F in Kempton and a bit of snow came down which lasted for a half day or so. People thought that this was really severe winter weather!

I never heard anything more about Jeans ear. However since ears are a peculiar interest of mine; I'd be interested to learn how long the difficulty lasted, exactly what was wrong, how the manifestations of symptoms appeared and whether ornot it is reoccurring.

Let me hear from you about something besides money when you have a chance to drop me a letter.