

2:45 p. m. April 14, 1943

Dearest love:

The last two days I have almost felt like throwing up my hands --but I don't think I'd ever really do that.

Yesterday morning I went out to the transmitter and spent about an hour with Mr. Meiners. I don't pretend to be a good judge of people, but I didn't think he was a bad sort. We just talked things over in a friendly fashion and this was the bulk of what he said: He had accepted a job with WCAE in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, for \$206 a month--just about the same, only a little more, than he would get when his salary was raised here. He had come to Austin for his wife's health and they liked Austin fine but now had learned of a new diathermy treatment whereby he thought his wife could get along alright in Pittsburgh where some of their family lived. He said he had never worked for such an inefficient organization in his life and just didn't like to, that he has asked Mr. Escoe for his over-time several times, that he had always been put off with excuses, that he had never got it yet and there was a dispute over the amount of it. That Mr. Escoe's attitude was always to see how he could beat any of the employees out of a dime, that the station had been misrepresented to him when he came down here as "going on to big power" and other things, that he just didn't like to work for someone you couldn't trust. He has suggested to Mr. Escoe several times that all the staff get together for little parties or meetings and try to brew a little enthusiasm and cooperative spirit and talk about the station's problems, but had never been able to get him to do it.

He said he thought Austin was a wonderful town with a great future and that I had a "gold mine" in this radio station if it were managed right--but that we had to have some "enthusiasm" and get-up-and-get. I told him that I quite agreed with him, that I was going to set about trying my hardest to follow through the station's many tough problems and iron them out, that it wouldn't be a matter of days or even months but I did think in a year's time we would have an organization we could all be proud of. I told him I wished he felt that he wanted to stay with us but I wouldn't want him to on the basis of all the things he found wrong being corrected tomorrow --because we had a heck of a financial problem to meet--but I knew the problems existed just like he did and bought it with the intention of building it up and doing something about them. He said he had already made up his mind to go to work for the Pittsburgh station because they had so much more equipment and testing stuff whereas we had none and he could feel that he was learning something and getting ahead in his profession--that he would like to work for me and if he ever got down this way again he would get in touch with me.

He will leave Saturday, April 24.

I asked him about our equipment and he said there were two musts: (1) we must paint the tower because if we didn't it would rust and ruin an expensive piece of property and because the CAA sent around inspectors to see if such towers were kept painted and lighted--ours was badly in need of paint--the inspector warned him--and if we didn't soon the CAA would tell the FCC and we would be in trouble. (2) We needed several

pieces of testing equipment badly but could do without all for a little while except an analyzer, which cost about \$75 and could certainly be purchased now--the FCC sent out catalogues of what could be obtained (maybe "bulletins" is the word) and we could and certainly should buy one now.

He also said we ought to have a couple more tubes on hand in case of emergency--it taking considerable time to get them and increasingly difficult.

He said we would very soon have to do about \$2000 worth of work on the studio equipment, pick-ups, console, and microphone, that it was all a home-made job and badly run down with poor fidelity that was definitely noticeable on the air. We could get along with it as it is for a while but there is no telling when it will be beyond further repair and remedy.

He did not sound like an "agitator" to me but just rather tired and disgusted. I feel sorry for Escoe, but I guess in his efforts to keep this thing on the air he has painted a different picture to possible employees over the phone than what they found when they got here, and it is all depressing.

Escoe said he is talking with an engineer at KTEM, and had 5 other little 250 watt stations in mind, and we'll simply have to get an engineer away from them. I don't like this but don't know what to do. The most disgusted I have ever been with the state of affairs here was when Escoe told me Sunday that he had not filed application to raise the two salaries--he had talked to the local man here, Hooper, who helped him fill out the forms. He had been talking to Meiners more after that, had the impression he was going to quit anyway, did not want to raise his salary for those back three or four weeks and have him quit anyway, had therefore not sent the forms in and had them still in his desk.

I told him we were probably out of luck then, in view of the President's order, to get it off airmail special at once, and I followed it with a letter to Brinsdon urging him to get us permission for the raise at once if he could legally do so. He answered yesterday that because of the president's order it was illegal to approve such a raise, that in case the need should arise in the future where we had different classifications--change of job to "assistant chief engineer" or something like that, that the local war labor board could approve it.

I asked told Escoe that about a month ago when he presented the problem, we all talked it over, and agreed to ask for a raise, I thought, you thought, and Mr. Kellam thought that he had gone ahead and asked for the raises, that when he changed his mind and decided to keep the applications in his desk, for whatever reason, he should have told us--and the reasons why--how could we get along 1600 miles away from a business when, all having agreed upon a course of action, and all thinking it was being acted upon, we found that it was not being acted upon at all. I told one of the engineers, Farmer, in Mr. Escoe's office in front of Escoe, that we had asked for the raise and expected it to be approved in about a month's time. Now I guess the engineer's think I am a liar too.....Escoe thinks Farmer will stay but I doubt it.

As you know by now, Bernard Hanks is in Washington now. I called him last night intending to go to Abilene today and found him enroute to Washington. I would like to go to Corpus either Friday or Saturday (had rather wait until he is in Abilene before going there)--will you tell him and wire me whether it will be a good time for me to go to Corpus? I intend to stay two or three days. I shall write Bob and Helen.

Must run over to Jesse's office and confer with him and Escoe. By the way, the building furnishes no janitor service of any description. Roosevelt Allan gets \$9.50 a week and is on duty from about 9:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. I don't see how we can fire him unless someone else, much higher paid, takes over the sweeping and dusting.

I am still lucky because I have you!! Always your loving,