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Confidential

Dear Pickavance,

After being bandied about between various committees, the Moon 21" bubble chamber project was discussed in a rather unsatisfactory meeting at Birmingham last week. Evans has told me what went on and no doubt you have heard from Snowden.

The project has for one thing to be looked at in the light of the fact that we are not satisfied that Birmingham can live up to its obligations on the magnet of the large National bubble chamber. In my opinion it is quite possible that the responsibility for this will have to be taken away.

Under these circumstances, I do not see how the National Institute can back a project which is, in fact, competing. One may argue about the desirability of the 21"; in my view the case is not very strong since we will have the 16" Imperial College chamber and the 10" Liverpool chamber. One may also question the adequacy of the proposed organisation at Birmingham and whether in fact they could test such a chamber there. Evans (and I believe others) were by no means satisfied last week on either point.

Also the Bubble Chamber Steering Committee had previously favoured a larger chamber as an "insurance policy" chamber in case the big National chamber should not be available at Harwell. But Moon said last week that he was not interested in a chamber which could not be tested at Birmingham, and for this 21" is the absolute maximum, if not over the maximum, because of liquifier capacity.

Under the circumstances, I think that the Physics Committee should be very careful about giving the Moon project its blessing.

Yours sincerely

*HWB Skinner*

P.S. Although I have not had any notice, Moore, who has just returned, says that the Visiting Committee at Geneva is to be on April 16. Cassels is my official substitute but I don't suppose he will want to go. I think you said you would be willing to go when you were here.

*Copy to Sir J Cockcroft.*