

I have also arranged to have a doublet antenna put in, a ten tube console and a six tube midget. This part is taken care of. You take care of the Stratosphere end of it.<sup>x</sup>

On January 28, 1935, a production release for 100 more units was authorized, giving a total of 200 authorized to that date. On January 31, 1935, the second production release was amended to 150 units, giving a total of 250 units released.<sup>xi</sup>

McDonald exercised some control over testing procedures for the Stratosphere. One example is from early 1935 and regards a vibration table “shaker” test for the 25-tube Stratosphere chassis. He communicated with Mr. Arthur Freese, urging him to shake the chassis before assembly of the dial glasses, since having the glasses installed could shatter the glass. Communicating with Gustafson, McDonald wanted to know how many chassis failed as a result of the vibration test.<sup>xii</sup>

McDonald’s personal glimpse of the development of the 1000Z Stratosphere is revealed in correspondence between McDonald and a good friend, Charles J. Iredell, a General Agent for the Penn Mutual Life Insurance Company. Charles heard through a friend who was a radio aficionado that Zenith was building a 20-tube set. Charles requested literature on it for himself and his friend.<sup>xiii</sup>

McDonald replied:

My Dear Charlie:

Thanks for your letter of February 1.

I am sending to you under separate cover a copy of the literature on the 25-tube set. This lists at \$750.00.

I am also sending the same literature to your friend, Mr. Stuart Anderson, at address given.

We have gone rather slowly on the production of this set, although we have had it in mind and have been working on it for over two years. We did not know whether the public was ready for it as yet. We decided to build them only in a custom way, putting thru [sic] an order for only 1,000 at a time and then only as our distributors and dealers ordered them from us.

Imagine our surprise when the samples of these got out and the dealers and distributors were wildly enthusiastic over it in spite of the \$750.00 price. We are now so far behind in deliveries that the next delivery for which we can accept orders will not be thru for five or six weeks—maybe seven. The sets that are coming thru are now allotted to various distributors thruout [sic] the United States. As fast as they receive the sets their dealers draw lots to see who gets them. The reaction to this set has been a complete surprise to us, because we thought the \$750.00 price would stop the sale of it regardless of its outstanding performance.

Now on the subject of performance, it will do no more European stations than our 11 or 12 tube sets, that is, it won’t bring in any stations that the 11 or 12 tube sets won’t bring in, but as for the tone quality, well Charlie, you have never heard anything like it. It is just unbelievable that reproduction can be brought thru a mechanical or electrical instrument as this does it.<sup>xiv</sup>

Ray Burnet produced a report for McDonald based on his visit to the J.A. White Distributing Company of Grand Rapids, Michigan, the Zenith Distributor for that area, in early February 1935. Ray voiced a concern for a problem that White noticed with the Stratosphere cabinet:

There is a black strip of wood across the front of the cabinet, just below the tuning dial section which is going to give trouble, in that because of the heat and moisture coming from the resting of the hand while tuning, the black wears off, leaving a very noticeable white streak, particularly so on the edge. Mr. White suggested that this piece of black wood be replaced with some such material as Bakelite. This is similar treatment to that given by the refrigerator people on their production. In their case, however, there is more than just looks, but it is more practical because of other materials being more absorbent.<sup>xv</sup>

Ray commented on White’s handling of the Zenith line:

The writer was very much impressed with the display room of the distributor, and the activity of the dealers in that display room yesterday. I was in their office approximately 7 hours, and the Stratosphere was turned on about 8 times. This