UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE — Radio Service — OFFICE OF INFORMATION

CHATS BY THE WEATHER MAN — Wednesday, Oct.19

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(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

ANNOUNCEMENT: Today the Weather Man is going to tell you about the Weather Bureau's forecast service to airmen. He's going to use the Lindbergh flight as an illustration. Incidentally, he has a lot to say so please stand by . . . .

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The Summer is over. Fall comes with the echo of tremendous adventures. All summer the air knew the whirr of airplanes; giant planes, small planes, planes silver-colored, grey, white, and dark. Great names have passed from lips to lips. Lindbergh, Byrd, Chamberlin, Redfern, Maitland, and a score more. The Atlantic has been crossed in a single flight. The Pacific, from California to Honolulu, has been spanned without a stop. A lonely flyer set out last May on a flight perhaps unparalleled in adventurous history, and flew from New York to Paris without a stop. Others followed with Atlantic flights. Still others soared into the sunset over the Pacific. These men are great and daring. They flew for a cause.

Now it has been done. Winter is coming on and such flights must be postponed for a time. It is time to look back on what the Summer's work in the air has meant to America and to civilization in general.

First of all, we must remember that the airman is largely dependent on favorable weather for his success in long-distance flights. All of last Summer's magnificent adventures in the air were not victorious. The storm conquered some. Mechanical imperfections in the planes themselves, brought other flyers down. Time and study will perfect the mechanics of flying. Man cannot make changes in the weather. He can only take advantage of the weather's whims. But first, man must know about even these. The United States Weather Bureau has made a specialty of studying the weather for many years, until now, the Bureau is able to predict, 90 per cent accurately, coming changes in the weather.

Weather observers are able to predict to-morrow's weather over the land where observation stations are numerous -- where observers are stationed in favorable locations -- where observations on wind velocity, air pressure, rainfall, temperature, and so on, can be telegraphed from station to station in a very short time. While it is not at all a simple matter to predict the movement of a storm over the United States, even with the complicated storm reporting and forecasting system which the Weather Bureau uses, still it is harder to chart and predict a storm's movement over an ocean. But, before trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific flights can be commercially successful, ways must be found to chart accurately storms over oceans and to forecast their future courses.

The Weather Man told me all this when I went to visit him the other day. I wanted to find out what the Weather Bureau is doing to make the air safer for airmen.

"Let's go back to last Spring," said I, in beginning. "Was the Weather Bureau getting any regular weather observations from out in the Atlantic then?"

"We were getting observations from the seacoast areas along the Atlantic and Pacific", answered the Weather Man, "as well as from points in the Caribbean Sea. But, at the time of the first-attempted trans-Atlantic flights, we were getting very few weather reports from vessels in the Atlantic steamer lanes east of New York City. Of course, the Weather Bureau was receiving scattering reports from the Azores, Iceland, Greenland, but you see, the flyers who wanted to span the Atlantic in a single flight, took out over the water and they needed frequent reports from points out at sea."

The Weather Man continued --

"Lindbergh followed the Great Circle route from New York to Paris. Now this route is off the regular steamer lanes and ordinarily we get no weather reports from points on or near the Great Circle route over the ocean. From where you set out oversea from Land's End, Newfoundland, there are 18 hundred miles of stormy North Atlantic water before you reach Ireland.

"You remember how the flyers waited in New York City for favorable weather reports. It would have been very foolish for even the most daring of them to have set out in the face of a storm, or against a doubtful weather report. Finally, on the morning of May 20th, Lindbergh set out. He had received a report that a storm was moving off toward the North, out of his Great Circle route, but it was still near enough so that he met a fog and some rain that froze on his plane as the air cooled to the freezing point. Then, when he got further along in his memorable flight, he met the outer fringe of a storm that was moving north and east. Luckily, the wind was at his back and that helped him on part of his way over the water west of Ireland. He literally flew over that stretch of his journey on the wings of the wind. He landed in Paris safely, as you know. Chamberlin and Levine were successful in reaching Germany on their f· famous flight. Byrd and his companions made the jump. But how many failed?"

"The Weather Bureau at first had no money available to supply a special Atlantic weather report service for flyers", continued the Weather Man. "It takes considerable money to maintain the two hundred weather observation stations which dot the United States, and the taxpayers must be convinced of the need for the expenditure of additional money before they will grant it to any service. Then a wave of long-distance flying swept over the Nation. Something had to be done to protect the flyers.

"Well, action was taken. To start the thing, the Radio Corporation of America agreed to transmit free, the weather reports from vessels along or near the flight route while Lindbergh was preparing for and making his flight. Then the Weather Bureau used money from a special fund and extended its North Atlantic weather service until, late in the Summer, reports were being received from vessels along the route, from Newfoundland, Greenland, Iceland, and out at

sea. Reports from Ireland, England, and western France were also received in time to aid some of the flyers.

"Even during the Summer, weather conditions over the Great Circle route from New York City to Europe are so changeable that it's rare that weather favorable to long-distance flying is found all the way across."

"Could the flyers follow the course of a storm and still keep out of it?" I asked.

"No", said the Weather Man, "because they travel so much faster than a storm. And then too, the speed of a storm varies. Its path may be open or blocked. The North Atlantic zone is a stormy section at best and the past season has been no exception to that rule. Up there where the aviator flies it may become so cool, even in Spring and early Summer, that the rain will freeze on the airman's wings and form a glaze.. This has brought down more than one flyer. These North Atlantic storms often cover a large area. In addition, fog often settles over the Grand Banks, Newfoundland, as well as over other areas of the Atlantic, and you know what fog means to the aviator."

By this time, I could see the difficulties of flying over the North Atlantic route. I could also see some of the dangers of ocean flying in general. So I asked--

"Isn't there some way by which a regular ocean weather service for airmen could be worked out?"

"There is a way", replied the Weather Man, "but it will cost money. In order to work out a consistent ocean weather forecast service, it will be necessary to receive large numbers of daily reports from ships at sea as well as from stations along the seacoast and in the heart of large land areas. If you have all of these stations distributed and organized, there will then have to be some central station where the reports are gathered together, analyzed, weather maps made, and from which the forecasts are finally issued. In order to forecast the weather over the North Atlantic, there will have to be many ships out at sea which will send in careful weather observations once or twice a day. Altogether these ships will have to send in thousands of radio messages and cablegrams. Both radio messages and cablegrams cost money to transmit. It will cost money to organize the work. Some day it will be done. Flying over the ocean will be commercially profitable and then there will be plenty of money to use in organizing this ocean weather forecast work. Meanwhile, the Weather Bureau is going ahead with plans and work. The Bureau already is making ocean weather forecasts on a small scale. By a small scale, I mean, a smaller scale than the Weather Bureau's land service. But it cost the Weather Bureau about $5,000 to pay for radio messages and cablegrams transmitted during last Summer's trans-Atlantic flights. An all-year-'round service, extended and well organized, would cost many times that much. But it would be worth it and someday we'll have it."

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ANNOUNCEMENT: These weather chats are released by the United States Department of Agriculture every other Wednesday. Station _____ will put another one on the air on November 2nd.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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