

105
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Radio Service

OFFICE OF
INFORMATION

CHATS WITH THE WEATHER MAN.

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Speaking Time: 9 Minutos.

ANNOUNCEMENT: "Whether on land, or whether on sea; we have weather, where ever we be." Today, however, is the day we hear about the work of the U. S. Weather Bureau's specialists in making this world safer from the vagaries of the weather---Our Old Ob. Server has had his usual chat with the experts and is now ready to tell us about his talk -----

Let me get the salt out of my eyes, and we'll have a chat about the sea. -----

Mr. E. B. Calvert, chief of the forecast division of the U. S. Weather Bureau, was telling me how much we landlubbers owe to ship masters in the way of reports as to weather conditions at sea. A lot of storms start at sea, but they don't all stay there. Many come ashore.

If you will just take a glance at a map of the globe, you'll see a big part of it is sea. Islands dotted here and there give a chance to get some reports from regular weather stations, but for the most part, we have to depend on ships sailing here and there for news about the weather over the oceans. Many ship masters cooperate with our Weather Bureau by making daily reports by radio by which our weather men keep track of storms which may hit our coasts.

Of course, ever since men first went down to the sea in ships, they have had to match their wits against the weather. Every ship captain has had to carry something of a weather Bureau under his hat. As Mr. Calvert was saying to me, our big oceangoing vessels today are almost independent of the weather so far as concerns the lives of passengers and the safety of the cargo. Bigger and better ships and the almost universal use of radio in spreading warnings of storms from one ship to another helps do that.

That set me to thinking. The U. S. Weather Bureau gets all those reports from ships at sea; but what do the ships at sea get out of it?-- what help is the U. S. Weather Bureau to ship masters?---I up and asked Mr. Calvert that question.

He pointed out, that ships often need to know what's coming from the land in the way of weather, so they can make their forecast of what they are likely to have at sea. Of course, the ships off our coasts would have a hard time getting such reports of weather in the United States if it weren't for our Weather Bureau.

But the U.S. Weather Bureau doesn't simply send ships land reports. It renders a very valuable service to mariners in collecting reports from other mariners and then consolidating and rebroadcasting them for the benefit of all. With radio, ships these days can get in touch with other ships in surrounding waters and get their reports of conditions. But if all the ships did that, Mr. Calvert explains, there would be a lot of confusion and disorder and waste of time and work in exchanging the needed tips about the tracks being taken by storms. By collecting the reports from ships at sea and distributing that information, making forecasts from it, and broadcasting warnings by radio for the benefit of marine interests on the coast and for considerable distance off the coast. The U. S. Weather Bureau is able to be of real help to even the most weather-wise of old salts.

The ships at sea transmit the weather reports to a shore radio station. The shore radio station forwards those reports to a forecast center of the Weather Bureau. The forecast center assembles the reports, combines them with reports from land weather stations, and wires them to the Naval radio stations. The Naval radio stations broadcast them to the ships.

In that way, the ship captain is furnished the needed information regularly. The Weather Bureau supplies ships which cooperate by reporting to it with base maps which the captain can use in drawing his own weather map on the basis of the reports and make his own deductions as to what the weather will be.

But the Weather Bureau also furnishes a forecast made by its own experts trained for years in this work. So that way, the skipper has available a weather specialist to help him if he wants that help. That forecast service includes advices and warnings about hurricanes and other violent storms at sea. Through its reports not only from ships but from island and coastal stations, the forecaster is able to locate the center of the storm, find out how much of a storm it is, and predict the path it will probably take. Such information is broadcast twice daily, or oftener if need be, from radio stations for the benefit of any ship which may be in threatened sections of the sea.

That kind of service, however, is not the only thing the Weather Bureau does for the men who move upon the waters. It cooperates with the Hydrographic Office of the United States Navy, in preparing weather information included in the Pilot Charts of the oceans. From many observations, made in many parts of the world, by men of many nations, the Weather Bureau experts work out the average weather conditions over the oceans, the routes taken by storms in years past, the prevailing winds, fog areas, and other weather information of interest and value to navigators of the seven seas.

Another service furnished by our weather men to those who work with them by reporting ocean weather is that of checking up on instruments used in making observations. The aim is for accuracy in reporting, Mr. Calvert points out. If there was no Weather Bureau or some such organization with which they could check their instruments, ships masters might well feel shaky as to how much they could depend on their own observations. As it is, however, ships reporting to the Bureau have the privilege when in port of comparing their instruments with standard instruments maintained at the Weather Bureau stations.

For instance, the ships must rely a great deal on their barometers for detecting the changes in air pressure which presage a storm or clearing weather. Most ships carry aneroid barometers which are more subject to inaccuracy than a mercury barometer although more suitable for use on a ship. Such instruments must be compared with a standard instrument often to keep them true, and altogether reliable.

But even when a ship is wrecked in a storm, the U. S. Weather Bureau may prove a very present help to the owners. The Bureau prepares certificates based on its records of weather conditions which are used in settling disputes over marine insurance and the like. But more of that next time.

ANNOUNCEMENT: You have just listened to a chat with the Weather Man. This is one of a series which this Station presents in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. These talks are made at this time ----- every other Friday.

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National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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