No. 84

August 17

A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Dr. Charles F. Brooks,
Secretary, American Meteorological Society,
discusses:

LIGHTNING RODS

The lightning rod agent of other days placed such a stigma of disrepute on this protection against lightning bolts that only recently has it regained the confidence of the public. The fact has been demonstrated scientifically and by the compilation of statistics that the building with a properly installed lightning rod system stands far less chance of being struck than does a similar one which is unprotected. Moreover, if the protected building is struck the chance of fire or other serious damage is reduced to a small minimum.

The conductors, preferably copper, should be grounded deep down where there is permanent dampness. They should not be near the telephone line and other metallic conductors.

The lightning rod serves two purposes. Its chief function is to afford an easy path to the ground for any bolt which strikes the building. A minor usefulness is to provide an efficient means to facilitate the nearly constant interchange between the electricity of the earth and that of the atmosphere. This quiet discharge may serve so to reduce the difference in potential between earth and clouds as to prevent a bolt being launched at this particular point, which otherwise might do great damage.

(Tomorrow: The Destructive Thundersquall)

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