

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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RADIO WEATHER MAPS

Some of the earliest experiments in the wireless transmission of weather data were made by the British and German weather services during five months in 1909. Observations were reported twice daily from ships in the North Atlantic, but less than 8 per cent. of the morning observations and only 43 per cent. of the evening ones came through on time to be of value. And even these were of little use to the German forecasters. Earlier experiments on the American side of the Atlantic were more encouraging for they involved information about highly destructive, though slow-moving hurricanes.

Slowly a radio reporting service was built up by various weather services till by the close of the war it was readily possible to make weather maps from weather reports received at sea by radio. Further developments took place till the making of weather maps at sea became routine practice on certain ships. Also the radio reports from ships both on the Atlantic and Pacific sides of our continent became sufficiently numerous to extend the weather map fronts well out to sea, with consequent greater safety from surprise storms.

Now comes the latest development; the actual transmission of weather maps by radio. The experiments, which appear likely to lead to the regular receipt of weather maps by ships at sea, in exchange for their weather reports, involve not the photographic transmission but the employment of an ink stylus for tracing lines on paper. The stylus method of reproducing the isobars and isotherms seems more practicable for use at sea.

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