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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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WEATHER SERVICE FOR MARINERS

The extensive arrangements that already exist for collecting weather reports from ships at sea and issuing weather bulletins, forecasts and storm warnings for the benefit of mariners will be enlarged and placed on a firmer foundation in the future, with the ratification of the convention adopted by the International Conference on Safety of Life at Sea, which met in London in April and May of this year.

One article of the convention reads in part as follows:

"The master of every ship which meets with dangerous ice, a dangerous derelict, a dangerous tropical storm or any other direct danger to navigation is bound to communicate the information, by all the means of communication at his disposal, to the ships in the vicinity, and also to the competent authorities at the first point of the coast with which he can communicate... Each contracting government will take all steps which it thinks necessary to ensure that when intelligence of any of the dangers specified... is received, it will be promptly brought to the knowledge of those concerned and communicated to other administrations interested."

Another article binds the contracting governments to "encourage the collection of meteorological data by ships at sea and to arrange for their examination, dissemination and exchange in the manner most suitable for the purpose of aiding navigation." The governments are required to issue warnings of storms by both radio and visual signals, to issue daily radio weather bulletins, and to arrange for certain selected ships of their respective countries to take and transmit weather observations at specified hours.

The provision concerning "selected ships" contemplates a total of 1000 such ships for the whole world, distributing among the maritime nations in proportion to registered tonnage. The quota for the British Empire is 356 ships and for the United States 180 ships.

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