

Released on receipt  
but intended for use  
October 7, 1929

A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed September 30, 1929

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,  
Authority on Meteorology.

RADIO REPORTS OF HURRICANES

The history of the tropical hurricane that recently "got lost" off the Florida coast illustrates the fact that the existing system of keeping track of the movements of such storms by means of radio reports from ships does not quite measure up to the expectations that were entertained of it when these reports were inaugurated. The reason for this is plain. When a storm is forming or when it enters the Caribbean region from the east, vessel reports are of great value as a means of locating it. During its subsequent career, however, few vessel reports are received from the vicinity of the storm, because, as soon as radio bulletins are flashed over the ocean reporting its course, shipmasters in the threatened area take steps to give it as wide a berth as possible.

It seems, therefore, worth while to consider the feasibility of stationing a number of floating "robots" at strategic points in the hurricane region to send out warnings by radio of the marked fall in barometric pressure that indicates the approach of a cyclone. Automatic radio recorders are already used for other purposes in meteorology. A recently invented type of sounding-balloon announces by radio the pressure and temperature encountered from time to time throughout its flight. Might not an aneroid barometer, attached to an anchored buoy, be arranged to send out similar reports as long as the pressure remained below a certain point?

If such a scheme is practicable, a few of these automatic weather stations would be vastly better than none -- just as the few vessels that now report by radio are vastly better than none.

(All rights reserved by Science Service, Inc.)

SCIENCE SERVICE  
21st and B Sts.  
Washington, D.C.