

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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OCEAN WEATHER REPORTS

The International Convention of Safety of Life at Sea, adopted at London in 1929, subject to ratification by the various maritime governments concerned, pledges the signatory powers to organize weather observations at sea and to arrange for ships to transmit the results to other ships and to the shore. A detailed plan for these reports was presented to the International Meteorological Conference meeting at Copenhagen last September, but before its definite adoption by all nations it is to be used experimentally by the British Meteorological Office, beginning May 1, 1930. The same meeting adopted a uniform code for transmitting ships' weather reports.

This scheme contemplates a total of 1,000 "selected ships" of various nationalities, which are to send regular radio reports of observations during their voyages. The complement of ships of each nation taking part in this programme will be in proportion to its total tonnage of vessels over 100 tons. The British Empire will participate with 356 ships, to be allotted among the main divisions of the Empire. The complement of the United States will be 180 ships.

The hours of observation for these ships throughout the world will be midnight, 6 a.m., noon and 6 p.m., Greenwich mean time. Ships having enough watch officers for the purpose will make all four observations; others will make three or two, preferably at the hours falling within the daylight period. Ships fitted for long-range radiotransmission will address their reports to appropriate shore stations, using the wave-length allotted to that station. Those not fitted for long-range transmission will address their reports to "all ships," using a wave-length of 600 meters spark, shore stations within range intercepting as required.

Apart from this routine programme, all ships are required to send reports of tropical revolving storms and of other storms in which the wind reaches hurricane force.

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