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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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FLOATING WEATHER BUREAUS

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Weather forecasting for the oceans is mainly performed on land, with the aid of a vast international system of weather reports collected from both land and sea and broadcast at certain hours of the day from powerful radio stations. A supplementary process is the issue of forecasts from ships. This plan was first put into operation about 13 years ago, when two forecasters from the French meteorological service were stationed on board the schoolship "Jacques Cartier" of the French Line (Compagnie Générale Transatlantique). During the occasional voyages of this vessel between France and Gulf ports of the United States weather maps were drawn from the land broadcasts and from many reports radioed directly to the "Jacques Cartier" from other ships. On the basis of these charts forecasts and bulletins of ocean weather were broadcast and proved very valuable to shipping. At one period the French cruiser "Jeanne d'Arc" cooperated in the work on the Atlantic and the U.S.S. "Chaumont" performed a similar service on the Pacific.

The "Jacques Cartier" went out of commission at the close of 1931, but her meteorological work was taken over by the "Cuba," of the same line, plying between France and Colon. Since the beginning of the present year two ships, the "Cuba" and the "Flandre," which make alternative voyages to Colon, have been assigned to this duty by the French Line, and as one or the other is always at sea the service is now continuous.

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