

ELECTRICITY IN SKIES STOPPED WIRE TRAFFIC

Northern Lines Badly Affected During Thursday's Phenom- enal Radiance.

The wire chief of the Western Union Telegraph Company in this city reported yesterday that telegraphing to northern points was continually interrupted between 9:45 and 11 o'clock on Thursday night while the skies were illuminated by an unusual radiance, reported by the Weather Bureau to be the Aurora Borealis.

An interesting thing about the experience of the telegraph company was that wires running southward suffered very little. The wires between this city and Buffalo were continually disturbed. The wires running further north from here to Halifax, however, were practically useless during the entire period in which the sky was lighted, indicating that the electrical disturbance grew more and more intense toward the north.

The interruptions of service between here and Buffalo ranged in duration from fifteen seconds to three minutes and occurred fifteen or twenty times while the display was going on in the sky. During the entire period it was found impossible to make use of the duplex telegraphing apparatus, which makes it possible to send more than one telegraph or telephone message over one wire at the same time. Messages for Western points, which normally would have passed through Buffalo, were sent over Southern wires, where comparatively little trouble was experienced.

The motors furnishing the electricity for the telegraph wires acted strangely throughout the period, it was reported at the Western Union offices. Just how the electricity in the air operated to interfere with the electrical apparatus could not be explained, but the effect was to change continually the quality of the current.

It was asserted that several times a year a condition of the atmosphere, supposed to be due to roaming charges of electricity in the air, cause wire trouble in perfectly clear weather. There was evidently far more than an ordinary amount of loose electricity about the earth's surface on Thursday night, as the interference with telegraph service was much more severe than is usual in magnetic outbreaks.

At the radio station in the Brooklyn Navy Yard, information as to the effect of the freakish electrical show on wireless operation was refused on the ground that all information of any character regarding wireless operation had to be furnished through official channels at Washington.