BLASTS ON SUN ROIL EARTH'S RADIO WAVES

Worst Solar Storm in Decade Under Way

Washington, Nov. 15 (UPI)— The worst sun-spawned magnetic storm in a decade swept the earth today, producing a global communications situation which experts said "couldn't be much worse."

No letup was in sight. Even as the bombardment hit, another gigantic eruption tore the sun's surface and aimed another mass of particles earthward.

Today's blowup was the third in less than a week. One scientist described it as one of history's "very great solar events."

Short Wave Radio Hit

A global warning network run by the International Geophysical Year to alert communications facilities reported that disturbance of the earth's atmosphere has become "extremely severe" by early evening.

One monitoring station reported that short wave radio contact between New York and London was all but impossible.

The current bombardment of solar particles and the one expected from the new sun eruption were expected to result in a new display of the aurora borealis — popularly known as the northern lights.

Worst Ever Recorded

Scientists expected the debris from today's sun explosion to hit the earth's ionosphere — a canopy of charged particles encircling the globe —by tomorrow night at latest.

James Weldon, director of the warning center, said the current solar flares are among the most severe ever recorded.

Weldon said it was possible the earth will continue to be pelted with ionized debris for another three days or so, at which time the sunspot area will move to the back side of the sun. The storm center still could be there 14 days later, he added, when that section again faces the earth.

"The whole scientific world is alerted because it's been some time since we've had this much activity and excitement," Weldon said.

May Affect Weather

In addition to causing communication trouble, the sun's bombardment has touched off some controversy among scientists about what other effects may be.

One authority, who has been observing sunspots for more than 30 years, said the explosions will influence the weather. But Weldon and the United States weather bureau said the impact cannot be determined.

Dr. Charles G. Abbott, former secretary of the Smithsonian institution and director of its astrophysical observatory, said particles from solar explosions come from the sun as if fired from machine guns. They "put a veil over the earth," he said, and often make it harder for heat from the sun to get thru.

But Glen Briar, who keeps statistics for the weather bureau, said the Abbott theory was "very controversial."