

## SUNSPOT STORM THREATENS A RADIO "BLACKOUT"

**A**STRONOMERS at the U. S. Naval Observatory in Washington, having reported one of the most active sunspots in nearly a year, short-wave broadcasters especially are warned that they may expect magnetic storms to bombard and to blot out their waves. The "storm" is described as "swiftly growing and easily visible to the eye through smoked glasses." It ushered in 1940.

Commenting on the disturbance, Science Service reports: "First sighted as a solitary sunspot on Dec. 31 with an area of only a quarter of a square degree, the group has grown actively each day. On Jan. 4 it contained 40 spots and had a size of 28 square degrees, more than 100 times its original area.

"There is a distinct possibility that the new year's sunspot inauguration will disturb, or even disrupt, transatlantic shortwave radio communication. Scientists have discovered that the activity (speed of growth) of a sunspot group is frequently associated with radio 'blackouts.' So if you have a short-wave receiver that fails to bring in Berlin or London in the next few days don't blame the set too much. Perhaps it will be caused by 1940's big sunspot outburst."