

# AURORA UPSETS WIRES

## Mysterious Electrical Storm Sweeps Two Continents.

### MOST SEVERE IN MANY YEARS

Telegraph and Telephone Lines Give Poor Service Under Strange, Magnetic Influence of the Northern Lights—Conditions Prevail Throughout Day—Meteors Fall in Honolulu.

New York, Sept. 25.—Gripped by the mysterious "aurora," telegraph wires practically all over the world were paralyzed today. From early morning until night communication was erratic, and at times cut off entirely between certain points.

Old telegraph operators called it the "aurora," for brilliant northern lights usually follow such an electrical phenomenon; but instead of watching for the display, they bent their minds and energies to untangling the snarl and adjusting their instruments.

The first break came shortly before 7 a. m., Eastern standard time, or noon at Greenwich, and for the next five hours telegraph wire chiefs from Boston to Chicago wrestled with the strange force.

That the disturbance was world-wide was shown by European dispatches, which told of similar trouble of lines on the continent as well as on the submarine cables.

The crest of the wave in the eastern part of this country seems to have been reached shortly before noon, and after that the wires began to act more rationally. Still, there were frequent throbs during the late afternoon and evening.

#### Wires All "Went Dead."

The wires working with Eastern and Western points "went dead" one after another. Atlantic cables began to show trouble, and the long distance lines of the telephone systems were reported useless. The influence on the electric systems displayed an intermittent character. The wires apparently would work all right, and then suddenly "go dead" for a few moments, and then pick up lamely.

In this symptom, the wire chiefs recognized the aurora borealis, which has caused such a phenomenon before, but rarely so severe. With the web of wires which radiates from New York in all directions, it was slow and difficult work to learn the extent of the disturbance. The phenomenon was most severe and made its first attack over south New England and Long Island, and then moved westward, carrying down every means of electrical communication before it.

As far west as Cincinnati and Chicago all circuits were in trouble. All telephone wires leading from New York to Chicago were paralyzed, and every means of wire communication was interrupted. The wave showed the first signs of passing at 8:51 o'clock, and seemed to be moving then rapidly westward. From wire points picked up momentarily it was reported that its influence had extended as far south as Virginia and eastern Tennessee.

#### Lines Heavily Charged.

During the height of the storm, which was reached shortly after 8 o'clock, the measuring instruments in the telegraph offices of this city registered a pressure on the wires of 500 volts of electric current from the mysterious source. This is a greater voltage than is supplied for the operation of any of the land wires. It lighted the incandescent resistance lamps attached to the telegraph wires, and brilliant sparks flashed when the telegraph keys were opened. A dispatch from Chicago stated that San Francisco and Seattle as well as Chicago had felt the disturbance. All telegraphic operations were at a standstill in Chicago at 7 a. m.

The phenomenon, while still much of an enigma, is known to be closely associated with the electro-magnetic system of the earth, although its intermittent effects, such as were manifest today, are not fully understood. Scientists say the most probable explanation is that the solar radiations of the aurora borealis possess electro-magnetic energy, which, when it reaches the earth, is divided into two principal fields. One of these passes through the earth in a line nearly parallel with the line joining the two magnetic poles and the other parallel to the plane of the elliptic. The first acts by the law of magnetic induction and the second by the law of magnetic refraction.

#### Europe Also Has Trouble.

London, Sept. 25.—The whole telegraphic system of the United Kingdom and all cable services are seriously affected by the magnetic storm experienced here soon after noon today. The underground wires suffered more than the overhead wires, the telephone system being little affected. The last occasion on which the wires were similarly put out of working order here was six years ago. The trouble is attributed by cable experts to the aurora borealis.

Honolulu, Sept. 25.—A phenomenal rain of meteors last night caused much excitement and some alarm among natives. The fall began at 10:55. Observers counted 40 meteors that fell into the sea.