

Aurora Borealis Lights Up D. C. Area; Resultant Calls Light Switchboards

By Phil Casey
Staff Reporter

The Washington area was hit with a strong case of Northern Lights early yesterday, and police and firemen suffered the most.

Insomniacs and people who apparently have something against beds were up to witness the spectacular display of aurora borealis that was hung up there in the sky from 1:27 to 1:33 a. m.

It had a reddish glow that must have resembled flame, for the non-sleepers started calling policemen, firemen and newspapers.

One firehouse reported that even rookie firemen were calling in, confessing they'd "never seen it before and figured it must be fire."

It was a grand aurora borealis, according to the surprised onlookers and John W. Evans, director of the Sacramento Peak Observatory, Sunspot, N. M., an Air Research and Development Command post for Cambridge Research Laboratories, Cambridge, Mass.

Evans had a good idea the thing was coming, for his station observed a "gigantic sun flare" Saturday morning. The aurora borealis is one of the effects of the sun flare, he said.

There are only three or four sun flares a year, he said, and

this was one of the largest, "if density and temperature of not the largest," ever recorded. (A flare is a giant hot spot, he said, evidence of an enormous magnetic field caused by an increase in the

Evans said the Washington

might see the aurora bo-

realis Sunday night and again

on Monday.