

# AURORA BOREALIS BLACKS OUT RADIO

Global Communications Cut  
as Brilliant Display Lights  
Up Skies Over U. S.

By VICTOR H. LAWN

An Aurora Borealis of unusual brilliance and intensity blacked out radio communications last night between the United States and the rest of the world.

The aurora, also known as the northern lights, was reported in this country from such widely scattered centers as Los Angeles, Tulsa, Okla.; Boston, Seattle, Wash.; Brunswick, Ga.; Vancouver, Canada, and Newfoundland.

In New York City the display was characterized by its red coloring. James S. Pickering, assistant astronomer of the Hayden Planetarium, said that "I have never seen such complete redness."

The aurora was accompanied by an electric storm that ended all radio communications between the United States and other countries and that disrupted telephone, teletype and electric circuits.

The effects of the aurora were felt even before it became visible. The Radio Corporation of America and the wireless receiving department of The New York Times reported fluctuations in radio reception from 8 P. M. on. At 8:30 o'clock, The Times lost contact with overseas stations and shortly thereafter R. C. A. also was blacked out to South America and to Europe.

From Newfoundland came reports that the magnetism from the aurora had caused the voltage in electric circuits to vary in a range of 320 volts. Utility companies in many parts of the United States reported similar disruptions.

The aurora is one of the phenomena being studied by scientists during the International Geophysical Year. The aurora is believed to be caused by streams of particles shot out from the sun. These streams, closely associated with sun spots and solar disturbances, are bent by the earth's magnetic field, thus creating electric storms as well as spectacular visual displays.

The red glow in the sky, heralding one of the most brilliant appearance of the aurora here in years, was first noticed in this area about 9 P. M. Forty minutes later the aurora reached its greatest intensity. After gradually diminishing, the aurora flared back to maximum brilliance on occasions.

About an hour later the red gave way to an arc of green with streaks of red and white.

Instead of waning, as had been expected, the aurora increased at 11:30 P. M., when it dropped a "curtain," a belt of shimmering light draping the northern sky. It was said to be one of the few occasions in which the auroral drapery had been seen here.

Weather conditions were reported favorable to a repetition of the display tonight.