

Radio Topics

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(Radio Engineer)

ST. PAUL RAILROAD ADOPTS RADIO FOR EMERGENCIES

There is generally a week or so every year in which snow and sleet storms put the usual telegraphic communication system out of commission. The curtailing of the telegraph has always, heretofore, meant the paralyzing of the railroad service and railroads have resorted to all sorts of schemes to provide emergency communication during these short periods. In the past year or so, broadcasting and amateur radio stations have rendered a fairly efficient temporary communication service, but these are not sufficiently permanent and organized to furnish the quick and reliable service which the railroads require.

It has been recently announced that a system of short wave radio the safe operation of trains even communication, designed to insure when blizzards or other catastrophes paralyze the means of communication upon which railroads are now dependent, is to be installed by the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul railroad throughout its entire system. Experiments in the establishment of perfect air communication have been successfully completed, and mark another step towards revolutionizing the operation of railroads by the use of radio.

Entire System Connected by Air
The St. Paul plans to connect its entire system by air, from Chicago to Seattle, a distance of 2200 miles. Transmitters and receivers for the radio-operating system will be established at pivotal stations of the road. These will be at Chicago, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Miles City, Butte, Spokane and Seattle, with stations to be erected at Kansas City and Omaha to take care of the southern terminals of the railroad. All communication will be in code.

Officials of the road said the equipment to be used had been successfully tested under conditions more severe than the maximum requirements of the railroad will require. It will insure emergency communication at all times and will protect the road from the delays caused by broken wires, tornadoes, sleet storms, etc.

Radio Patents Wanted
The recent widespread popularity of radio has resulted in the swamping of the United States patent office under the greatest deluge of applications in history. Altho the number of examiners handling radio applications has been almost trebled, there were in July 1926 patents pending as compared with 1594 at the beginning of 1926.

The radio division is now five months behind on its applications. The petitions increased to such an extent immediately after broadcasting attained popularity that radio was constituted a separate division, but even with twelve assistants it has lost ground steadily.

Characteristic Radio Programs
Broadcasting stations, like human beings, have individual personalities which are reflected thru their programs, and it is not inconceivable that various stations could be identified by their programs. It is reported that a Los Angeles fan has actually done this. He was blindfolded and placed before a loudspeaker while the stations were tuned in one after the other, without any call letters being given. This radio fan identified successfully eight out of nine stations which he listened to.

A certain pessimist, upon hearing this report was heard to remark that some of the stations could have been easily identified by the odor of their programs.

C. 1926, The Bonnet Brown Corp.

Maybe these European debtor nations feel that we ought to be stung for being foolish enough to lend them that much money.

The communist believes in adding what the other fellow has to what the communist hasn't, and then dividing it all up.

The average man won't begin to worry about our not getting into the World Court until the football season is over, at least.

MAKING VOLCANO WORK FOR THEM

Greeks on Aegean Islands; Use Products for Building Purposes

The islands of the Aegean have again been visited by earthquakes. The center of the disturbance was in a group of islands called the Cyclades, the chief of which is Syra, where is located the most important orphanage training school maintained by the Near East Relief.

The earthquake malady is chronic in these islands, and historical records show it has been going on for 3,000 years. In recent years, the damage has seldom been serious, although the shocks are often severe.

The Aegean island that suffers most from earthquakes and volcanoes is Thera, about ten miles from the "American island" of Syra. The island itself is the top of a giant volcanic crater, the brim of which has been broken, allowing the sea to flow in.

American engineers, engaged in construction work for the relief school at Syra, helped the inhabitants of Thera to turn what would ordinarily seem a curse into a blessing. They showed the Greek peasants how to make the volcano support them,—not by building a giant steam engine over it, but by exploiting the products of volcanic action found on the island. One of these is a volcanic cement, composed of pumice stone, and valuable as a hydraulic building cement. This substance was first used by Americans for the foundations of the

buildings that house the Near East schools at Syra. Since that time the cement has been widely used throughout Greece.

REPORT OIL SUPPLY FOR ABOUT 6 YEARS

Prospect of Shortage Causes Study of Conservation of Fuels

Following the startling announcement of the Federal Oil Conservation board recently that our reserves of oil from present producing and proved fields amount to only a six-years supply, leaders in the manufactured gas industry are giving study to the problem of fuel conservation and use.

They state that a petroleum shortage would have two effects upon their business:

First, it would bring an enormous demand for gas. People now using oil for heating of buildings or in industrial processes are accustomed to a smokeless fuel and would turn to

gas, throwing a sudden load on the already rapidly growing industry.

Second, gas-burning appliances and gas-making apparatus would have to be adjusted for gas having a lower heat content. At the present time gas is made from coal, but before it carries the heat content established when it was chiefly used for illuminating purposes, the gas is enriched with oil. Elimination of oil would enable the industry to sell cheaper heat, but would require an extensive campaign to change the habits of its customers.

However, the leaders say, it is possible for the industry to absorb the demand for heat now furnished by the oil business, for the United States has enormous coal reserves. In Illinois alone, coal deposits are sufficient for 1,700 years at the state's present rate of consumption.

Stocks of anthracite are accumulating rapidly, and maybe coal won't be very much higher than usual next winter.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

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