

# Aurora Borealis Gives City a Show As Sun Spots Disorganize Radio

## Display of Northern Lights Unparalleled in Years Seen From Buffalo to Virginia— Dodger Fans See Red as Broadcast Fails

Sun spots and the aurora borealis yesterday and last night played havoc with radio communications, but treated New York and the Eastern Seaboard as far south as Virginia to a display of light unparalleled in recent years.

During the day thousands of Brooklyn Dodger fans expressed themselves forcibly when a broadcast of the game with the Pittsburgh Pirates at Pittsburgh went off the air, with the score 0-0. With nightfall, the Northern Lights took up the performance the sun spots had begun, painting the sky above the city in orange, blue and pale green.

The appearance of spots on the sun and of the aurora frequently coincide, according to the experts, and both affect wireless communication. Last night's aurora, according to observers at the Hayden Planetarium and the United States Weather Bureau, was particularly brilliant.

Clear cool air moving down from the north and the absence of clouds permitted watchers to distinguish the aurora colors, which, according to the Weather Bureau, ranged from orange to green and pale blue, an unusual phenomenon in this latitude.

Charles A. Federer Jr., editor of *The Sky*, who watched the lights from the Hayden Planetarium, said that the light emitted by the aurora at times equaled that of full moonlight. At one time, he added, three large arches of light were visible and other manifestations included "bands" and "curtains"—groups of rays—and a coronal, flashing rapidly on and off. Such variety, he said, had never come under his observation in a single display of the lights.

The Weather Bureau reported that the Northern Lights were visible at stations from Richmond, Va., to the St. Lawrence, West to Lake Erie and along the North Atlantic coast and were particularly vivid in color.

The boardwalk at Rockaway Beach provided one grandstand for the celestial show from which several hundred persons watched. Residents in suburban districts reported the strange color effects, and even from the Times Square district, with its brilliant ground-lighting, a green arch, reaching higher than the Big Dipper, was visible during the evening.

Among the most surprised spectators were the passengers of an evening American Airlines plane bound for La Guardia Field from Scranton, Pa. They saw the aurora and thought it was a rainbow, according to the pilot, Dan Henry. In the Bronx, some one telephoned the police to inquire if the city was being bombed.

The appearance of the Northern Lights was the first this year in New York City, according to the

Weather Bureau. A similar but less intense disturbance was last reported here last August.

The performance of the aurora apparently began early yesterday morning. Robert A. Coles, assistant curator, according to Mr. Federer, reported seeing the phenomena at about 4:30 A. M. on that day. Last night, after delivering a lecture at the Planetarium, Mr. Coles led the audience out to the entrance of the building and explained the appearance of the lights.

According to the United Press, an aurora was visible in Denver, Colo., and at St. Louis yesterday, while the sun spots—manifestation of gigantic storms on the sun's surface—were observed here the day before.

The troubles of the Dodger fans began at 4 P. M. while Red Barber was broadcasting the story of the Pittsburgh game over WOR. The broadcast was inaudible for fifteen minutes and when it resumed the Pirates had piled up four runs. Thousands of Brooklyn followers meanwhile had telephoned the station and displayed little satisfaction with the explanation that the sun was to blame.

The disturbance interfered with a special broadcast of the National Broadcasting Company opening a link with a network of twenty-three radio stations in Mexico. The program originating in this country was heard clearly in the United States but not in Mexico and the program originating in Mexico was cut off by static to listeners in this country.

Electrical disturbances during the day affected transatlantic short-wave radio channels, disrupting traffic almost completely, and also some land wires.

The storm, called one of the most severe, but far from a record disturbance, broke early yesterday. Throughout most of the day communication with Europe was "out" and the disturbance was still very much in evidence late last night. NBC and CBS-short-wave listening posts reported trouble throughout the day.

American Telephone and Telegraph radio phone circuits were inoperative. A few calls, however, were switched over the long-wave circuit to Europe by way of Houlton, Me. A report from Montreal said the Marconi beam channel to Australia had been out from noon on. There appeared to be relatively little disturbance over long wire lines, according to Western Union engineers.

Henry Hallborg, RCA Communications engineer, who studies the sun's effect on the earth, said the disturbance "seems to be a random shot" from the midst of a "broad quiescent period" in solar activity, and, as such, could not have been predicted.