

aurora or polar lights; the natural electric currents which flow in the earth's crust; the electric condition of the atmosphere; the relation of radio transmission and reception to all these phenomena and to the condition of the surface of the sun, also meteorological conditions to great heights in the atmosphere.

The Senate committee in making its favorable report for authorizing the \$30,000 expenditure said:

It must not be forgotten that this polar year program has by now become irrevocable, except in the event of direct calamity. Too many nations have already made extensive preparations for the work to permit its being dropped except under very special circumstances. There is at present not the slightest prospect that it will be dropped. The present plan is that the United States of America shall provide funds for a polar-year station at Fairbanks, Alaska. The request for \$30,000 has been made with full realization that adverse economic conditions demand that the amount shall represent the irreducible minimum for carrying on the work at that station.

Fairbanks, Alaska, occupies a key position in the distribution of polar-year stations. There are no other stations near-by—in fact, unless Fairbanks is occupied as a station, about one fourth of the Arctic region will be totally neglected. . . . Economically we are probably not worse off than are other nations that are participating.

COMMITTEE ON NOISE MEASUREMENT OF THE AMERICAN STANDARDS ASSOCIATION

THE organization of a sectional committee on noise measurement under the procedure of the American Standards Association was recommended by a general conference of 32 representatives of 18 national bodies held in New York on January 29. It was also recommended that the committee function under the technical leadership of the Acoustical Society of America.

The scope of the project as recommended by a steering committee consisting of Professor Vern O. Knudsen, Acoustical Society of America; E. E. Free, American Society of Mechanical Engineers; P. L. Alger, American Institute of Electrical Engineers; H. R. Summerhayes, National Electrical Manufacturers Association; R. G. McCurdy, ASA Telephone Group; and Dr. Harvey Fletcher, Acoustical Society of America, is the "Preparation of general standards of nomenclature, units, scales and measurement in the field of acoustics, with special reference to noise measurements."

The conference followed a request made by the Acoustical Society of America to the American Standards Association to set up a national committee to correlate the activities of various technical and trade organizations which have been attempting indi-

vidually to set up standards for noise measurement. Eight such organizations now have committees on this subject. It was pointed out that the diverse nomenclature and methods of measurement growing out of these uncorrelated activities were interfering with the progress of scientific work on the subject and that without real national standardization this condition would become worse as different individuals became accustomed to different concepts and terms.

For the present the committee's work will be concentrated chiefly on the standardization of nomenclature, units and scales. It is believed that further progress in the science of noise measurement is necessary before effective standardization of this phase of the subject can be completed. There is some confusion in the measurement of noise at the present time because of the complex nature of noises and their effect upon the ear, and the fact that none of the noise meters yet designed can translate the approximate physiological and psychological effects of noise into definite units of measurement. Dr. Harvey Fletcher, of the Bell Telephone Laboratories, pointed out at the conference that to the average individual a noise composed of widely separated frequencies is less disturbing than a noise of equal intensity, but having components close together in the frequency range.

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