

RADIO NOISE ATTACK BY SUN
IS STUDIED WITH RADAR MIRRORS

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By SCIENCE SERVICE

STERLING, Va., Dec. -- The sun is attacking the earth with hissing and popping noises. The Bureau of Standards is starting out to investigate these radio noises originating in the sun. Two giant radar mirrors are being set up for this study here at the radio propagation laboratory. These solar noises are becoming increasingly important with the use of higher and higher frequencies in communication and radar equipment.

These radio waves sent out by the sun may prove useful in many ways. A radio sextant might be built, for instance, that would use solar noise to determine the position of a ship at sea. Ships could thus navigate by the sun despite overcast skies.

Frequencies and intensities of solar radio waves are to be investigated and the actual sources of these waves determined as closely as possible with two giant radar mirrors measuring about 25 feet in diameter. These mirrors, which will be automatically directed toward the sun during the day, can capture a large amount of energy from the solar broadcasts.

Radio waves constantly pouring out from the sun, interfere with reception of broadcasts over very-high and ultra-high frequency receivers. They are heard as short "puffs" and "swishes" that last a second or more. Sometimes these "swishes overlap, resulting in an irritating grinding noise which may cause streaking on a television screen and picture jumpiness. Intense bursts of solar transmission, lasting several hours, have blanked out a radar pointed at the sun.

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National Bureau of Standards
Radio Propagation Laboratory
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*also in
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