

Wireless Telephone Pursuing Man 232 To Remotest Corner of Seven Seas

Traveler Will Soon Be Unable to Dodge Business Cares by Ocean Voyage, for Insistent Callers Will Trail Him to His Cabin Aboard Ship



THERE is many a tired, as the saying goes, business man who has taken a trip to Europe for no other reason than that he wanted to be out of reach of that useful, but at times annoying, instrument, the telephone. His was the pleasure of draping his feet over the bridging extremities of a deckchair without fear of those haunting bells which Mr. Poe might well have included in his ode.

But seclusion is a thing of darker ages. There is little of it to be had today at any price. Where the wires do not bore in to find a man the wireless does. And now the last barrier, the sea, is to fall. E. N. Pickerill, chief radio operator of the Leviathan, declares that within two years wireless telephony at sea will be a practical reality and shortly thereafter all the big ocean liners will have their staterooms equipped with telephones through which all the world may have access to the traveler.

"We have experimented with complete success from the Leviathan," says Mr. Pickerill. "I have talked over a telephone from the ship when it was well out in the Atlantic to offices in the Woolworth Building here in New York. I have talked to Washington and to private residences in Ohio.

"As a matter of fact, the system could be established today. There is a station at Deal Beach, N. J., which is fully equipped to connect ocean liners with such telephone numbers as their passengers may call, but full readiness on the part of people to the idea is being awaited."

And so there will soon be no rest for the man in the deck chair. He'll no sooner get past Sandy Hook than his partner will be calling up to ask what he did with that letter from Whoosis & Co. And possibly the wife will give him a ring just to see whether she can catch the taint of contraband on his sadly tempted breath.

Incidentally, being the chief wireless operator of the Leviathan isn't exactly a sinecure, in case any one trundles up to you in a two-ton truck and asks. The ship has the most complete wireless equipment afloat. Because of the fact that so many of its passengers are likely to make use of the wireless it is necessary that it be equipped telegraphically as though it were a city of 100,000 persons.

During its average trip of five days over and five days back it handles 3000 messages—to and from just about every corner of the old globe. It has proved a sending range of 8600 miles. Last year Mr. Pickerill sent a message when 1600 miles east of New York in the Atlantic. It was picked up by a vessel 4000 miles west of San Francisco. That's traveling.

The liner also has a broadcasting range that isn't to be sniffed at. Last year Mr. Pickerill experimented with broadcasting the ship's programs held nightly. He received messages from every State east

of the Mississippi, from England and from Germany telling of receipt of the programs. Experiments in the broadcasting line have been discontinued, however, until the radio conferees decide what ships shall be allowed to do so. It was feared some operators might become so engrossed in broadcasting that they wouldn't stop to hear signals.

"We can pick up just about all the stations that broadcast—at least the powerful ones," says Mr. Pickerill. "We hear all the big American stations well out at sea and we can tune in also on London and on Eiffel Tower and Berlin and Brussels.

"America unquestionably leads with the radio so far. England's programs are not varied enough. You hear the same thing night after night. Germany is coming along well and is making a point of broadcasting only interesting things."

Mr. Pickerill is one of the pioneers of radio in America. He began dabbling in it more than twenty years ago and was associated for a time with Dr. Lee De Forest in experimental work. He was the first man to receive from the Government a first-class license, the highest recognition given a radio operator.

When the war came along he enlisted in the aviation service. He organized some of the army's radio schools and for a time was in charge of the process of equipping airplanes with radio. He commanded the 135th Aero Squadron and also was in command of Post Field, at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, one of the largest of the aviation fields. He later joined the Radio Corporation of America and did much experimental work.

He had served on several ships and had equipped many others with radio, so when the Leviathan was turned into an American passenger ship he was called to the post of chief radio operator. He has served aboard the huge liner ever since.

What with his interest in both radio and aviation, he is, of course, interested in the combination of the two. He sees the radio as an essential for aviation development.

"The time is rapidly approaching," he says, "when radio equipment will be as much a part of an airplane as it is now of a ship. It will be of great value in co-ordination with the night lighting system.

"The radio will enable an aviator to get his bearings, just as it has helped ships to get theirs. And at night or in a fog it will be of vast assistance in guiding planes to their landing spots. All successful air lines will develop with radio."

And speaking of air lines he believes their development is imminent. Within the next year or two he expects to see commercial aviation put upon a thoroughly active and practical basis. And the wireless telephone will get you there, too.