Hurrican Hazel's Damage To the Electric Company

Only a storm of hurrican intensity could cause the unavoidable shut-down of the main generating plant at Vienna last Friday night.

When the 100-mile-per-hour wind lashed the tidewaters of this peninsula, the air was filled with salt spray. The salty moisture became so dense that it coated the insulators on the high tension lines at the Vienna Plant. Salt water is an excellent conductor of electricity. Therefore, the high voltage curent "arced" across the insulators, short circuited the current and automatically shut off the current in the transmission lines. "Many people probably have seen evidence of this saltiness on their own window panes which faced the gale," said Ned Mortimer, manager of operations for Eastern Shore Public Service and Delaware Power and Light Company, as he explained this almost unheard-of cause of service stoppage.

Mr. Mortimer continued, "The remedy necessary for the disastrous salt spray was a good washing with fresh water .Deep appreciation is due to the Delmarva Volunteer Fire men for their generous cooperation. They offered to wash the insulators with their fire hoses, not only at Vienna, but at substations in various other communities where the same difficulty prevailed. The Vienna Plant resumed production by 10:30 Friday night, and by Saturday night all the substations were cleared of salt spray and in operation again."

The fury of the storm caused some breaks of freakish nature in the main transmission lines. For example, north of Salisbury a broiler house blew away high in the air and fetched up across not just one, but two trunk lines serving Salisbury and Snow Hill.

Distribution lines were fantastically scrambled by falling trees and literally hundreds of poles snapped under the strain. Some 500 electric company employees worked night and day with only brief periods of rest from Friday afternoon until service was restored throughout the system. Everyone who could help gladly volunteered for service. In view of the extra hazards involved [illegible] duty, tangled live wires, [illegible] hours, the [illegible] one unfortunate fatality, however, to a member of the public. Elmer Sordan of Bridgeville, was in a parked car when a power line felled by the storm dropped across the car. He had remained inside, as advised by by-standers, until help could be summoned to cut off the current, he would have been quite safe. But he tried to get out of the car. In so doing he made contact with the ground while still holding on to the car and was electrocuted.

In laboring to restore service in a wide-spread territory, line crews had instruction to work first where the most customers would benefit with the least delay. For instance, if clearing a tree from a line meant service for 10 customers, that tree was removed before one affecting only 5 or 10 customers. Working on local lines, the crews must necessarily complete work in one small area at a time. As each area was cleared of trouble, those customers within that area got service. Where two houses next to each other had to be served from two different transformers, perhaps one house got service earlier than its neighbor because ther ewere greater difficulties on the latter's circuit.

"We sincerely regret any interruption of service, even a momentary one," said George M Nelson, rpesident of Eastern Shore uPblicSer vice. "In this unprecedented emergency we feel deeply thankful to the public for their understanding of its magnitude and their patience.

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NOTICE TO CREDITORS

NOTICE is hereby given that the undersigned has obtained from the Orphan's Court for Queen Anne's County letters of Administration on the personal estate of

NEWTON PIERSON

late of said county, deceased. All persons having claims against said deceased's estate are hereby warned to exhibit the same, with the proper vouchers thereof, to the undersigned on or before the 8th day of April, 1955, otherwise they may by law be excluded from all benefit of said deceased's personal estate.

All persons indebted to this estate must settle at once.

Given under my hand this 25th day of September, 1954.

THOMAS E. PIERSON
Administrator of the estate of
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