the period to which the forecast related. The forecast published daily in *The Times* is issued by the Office at 7 p.m. and relates to the 24 hours ending at midnight on the following day. These forecasts cannot in any case reach most of the places where they are likely to be useful until some time after the next day's work has been arranged, but as local post offices close at 8 p.m. the principal medium of distribution must be the morning newspaper—rarely received until eight or nine hours of the forecast have passed, and two or three hours of the day's work been accomplished.

But from June 1 to September 30 of each year the Meteorological Office issues (to applicants paying cost of the telegrams, *i.e.* Post Office charges only), special forecasts for "agricultural purposes." These are drawn up at 2.30 p.m. and refer primarily to the period of 15 hours, 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. next day. Presumably they could be issued all the year round, and they could easily reach the general public before the arrangements for next day's work were finally completed, provided proper facilities for distribution were given. Early editions of evening papers are obviously useful only in towns, but the systems employed in some countries whereby forecasts are displayed (say about 3.30 p.m.) at local telegraph offices, or even their contents made known by signals affixed to railway trains, do not seem impracticable.

The report of the "Road Conference," published in your columns on May 1 last, shows that certain bodies are moving in this matter, but it is time that a definite effort should be made to test the utility of forecasts to the community. This can only be done by distributing the forecasts, for a time at least, so generally that those persons whose action depends upon forming an opinion about future weather may have them within reach. The result of a test made in this way would afford a basis for discussion on the whole question.—I am, your obedient servant, H. N. DICKSON, President of the Royal Meteorological Society, *July* 4, 1911.

Phenomena accompanying the Eruption of Taal Volcano, January 30, 1911.

The Rev. José Algué, the Director of the Philippine Weather Bureau, in forwarding a preliminary report by the Rev. M. S. Masó, the Assistant Director, on the disastrous eruption of Taal Volcano on January 30, 1911, calls attention to the following facts which he considers may prove of interest to the Fellows of the Royal Meteorological Society :—

"(1) The electric display which accompanied the eruption added greatly to the terrors of the phenomenon. As seen from Manila, at a distance of 63 kilometres from the volcano, it had the appearance of an unusually violent thunderstorm, except that there were no clouds, the brightest stars being visible through rifts in the huge black masses of smoke, ashes, and mud. During the period of greatest electric activity, which was from 2.30 to 2.50 a.m., I tried to secure some photographs of the phenomenon, but during a five-minutes exposure, at 2.40 to 2.45, only the flashes of lightning made any impression on the plate, which seems to show that the light emitted by the globes of fire was of low actinity. Some of the flashes recorded appear at an angular distance of about 13° above the horizon and 17° from the crater (toward west), which would seem to indicate that electric discharges took place up to a height of nearly 15 kilometres above the earth and at least 19 kilometres in a slanting direction (toward west) of the crater.

"(2) I beg to call attention to the circumstance that during the electric storm there has been a decided *falling* of the barometer, while it is well known that during ordinary thunderstorms atmospheric pressure *increases*.

"(3) The volcanic ashes have attained a great height and been driven to considerable distances, as is proved by the fact that small quantities of them