THE TECH

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EDUCATING AND SCIENTIFIC NOTES

The long series of tests conducted by the United States government to determine by radio-telegraphy the difference in time between Washington and Paris were concluded last week. The longitudinal difference between the two cities was declared to be 0.4 minutes.

The tests were conducted from the Naval Observatory and the Electric Tower in Paris. Signals were transmitted at the rate of 175,000 miles a second. The distance between the points on a great circle is 3831 miles.

Aluminum has lately been put to a new use as a medium for printing. In this capacity it is, within a given range, largely displacing engraved copper plates and the familiar lithographic stone. When the government introduced the publication of nautical charts, all were engraved copper copies, minute details and all the skill and beauty the engraver's art could command. This plan was followed for a considerable interval, but gradually as the number of charts increased the task of keeping them correct and up-to-date became formidable—so, of course, a chart is of no value unless frequent revisions keep it authentic as to changes in marine conditions. In the demand for up-to-date maps, these multiplying responsibilities made a shortcut in chart-making necessary and as a result aluminum printing plates came into use.

Aluminum printing plates are prepared by what approximates a photolithographic process. The advantage of this plan over the old idea of lithography on stone can be easily ascertained when it is stated that an aluminum printing plate of the size of the average chart weighs between four and five pounds, whereas, a lithographic stone of corresponding size weighs six hundred twenty pounds. Moreover the cost of the aluminum plate is about four dollars and sixty cents. The expense of preparing a lithographic stone of equal usefulness would amount to nearly two hundred dollars.

A bridge-building record has been made by the Royal Canadian Engineers while in camp with the first overseas contingent at Valcartier, about nineteen miles above Quebec on the Canadian Northern. Three hundred men erected a three hundred fifty-foot artillery bridge across the Jacques Carrier River, which separates the main camp from the artillery practice grounds at the base of Mounts Ileene and Irene of the Laurentian Hills, in exactly four hours and ten minutes. This is considered a world's record for spanning rivers. The Engineers are now at the front fighting for the British Empire.

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