this unusual season of drought the old saying, "all signs fail in a dry time" holds good.—*G. H. Burnham.*

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES.

[Submitted by A. H. Palmer.]

The diminished visibility attending fog was the indirect cause of two marine disasters on the Pacific Coast within a few days of each other during August, 1921. On August 6 the steamer "Alaska," bound from Seattle to San Francisco, ran ashore on Blunt's Reef during a dense fog. A total of 49 lives were lost, and the ship was a total loss. On August 10 the Pacific Mail liner "San Jose," enroute from the Panama Canal northward, ran ashore on San Roque Island, off Lower California, during a dense fog. Tugs summoned by wireless from San Diego were unable to pull the vessel into deep water. Though no lives were lost, the ship, valued at more than $1,000,000, was a total loss. Most of the cargo was salvaged.

The highest temperature recorded during the past summer at Greenland Ranch, in Death Valley, California, was 123°, which occurred on July 1 and 8. The temperature rose to 100° or higher on 22 days during June, on 31 days during July, and on 30 days during August.

Because of the frequency with which fires have started on automobile trucks carrying gasoline, a California oil company assigned one of its experts to investigate the problem with a view of discovering their origin. The investigator found that they were due to small electrical discharges. Because of their rubber tires, the trucks were found to be insulated from the ground. Small charges of electricity developed as a result of static electricity or through friction, and a tiny spark across a gap was sufficient to ignite the highly inflammable gasoline. As a remedy the investigator recommended that each truck carry a chain drag for the purpose of serving as a conductor with the ground. The suggestion was adopted, and fewer mysterious fires have since occurred. Hereafter, when you see an automobile truck dragging a small iron chain under it you will understand that this does not necessarily indicate carelessness on the part of the chauffeur, as the chain may be serving a useful purpose.

Dr. STEPHEN S. VISHER, who received the Bishop Museum Fellowship from Yale University, is in Honolulu for the purpose of making a study of the influence of climate upon the people of the Pacific, with special emphasis upon the influence of cyclonic storms.

Miss ANNE LOUISE BECK, who held the American-Scandinavian Fellowship in Meteorology last year has returned from Bergen Museum, Norway, and now holds a teaching fellowship in astronomy in the University of California, Berkeley, California.

Diameter growth in Box Elder and Blue Spruce.—By the use of the dendrograph, invented by MacDougal, C. F. Korstian, of Ogden, Utah, and MacDougal have found some interesting facts about diameter growth of trees (*Botanical Gazette* June, 1921, vol. 71, pp. 454–461, 3 figs, bibliog.).

In experimenting with the *Acer Negundo* it was learned that its growth begins about the 19th of May and that it is proportional to the *range* of temperature, *i. e.*, the greater the variation between night temperature and day temperature, the greater the diameter increase. With *Picea Parryana* no direct correlation could be found between the growth and the current temperature. The growth lagged behind the temperature changes. Cambial activity is dependent upon the temperature; while soil temperature and insolation are influential factors. During the non-growth period nothing was observed but alternate shrinkage and expansion due to changes in moisture and temperature.—*R. F. E.*