

Chats by the Weather Man.

Wed., Mar 9.

PROGRAM.....

RELEASE.....

1927

ANNOUNCEMENT: The Weather Man, broadcasting his regular Wednesday evening Chat, through Station \_\_\_\_\_, He's going to tell you about the Climatological Division of the U.S. Weather Bureau. This important Division can tell you, on short notice, about the climate of any section of the United States for the past 50 years.

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"This man wants to know all about the weather out there".

The Weather Man was reading a letter spread upon his desk. I was listening.

"Out where?" I interrupted.

"Why, it just happens that this chap is interested in the weather of Southern California", the Weather Man replied, as he swung toward me in his office swivel chair. His letter is dated March 2nd, 1927. We get letters asking questions like this every day. Yesterday, for instance, we got a letter from a man down near the Mason and Dixon line wanting to know if he could raise cotton in that section of the country".

"Say, what does he think you are --- an agricultural encyclopedia?" I broke in.

"Not at all", answered my friend. His question's fair enough. One of the main duties of the Weather Bureau is to answer just such inquiries".

"But why doesn't he plant cotton and find out if it'll grow? Why doesn't he ask his neighbors what their experience has been with cotton?"

"It's an expensive proposition to plant cotton as an experiment", the observer replied. "And the neighbors haven't always learned to do the best thing for their particular community, you know. To raise a good cotton crop, you need a certain amount of heat and moisture, -- a growing season of some length, -- and a certain number of what are called heat-days or heat-units. The Weather Bureau has information on the weather: -- The rainfall, temperature, wind conditions, snowfall, sunshine, etc., -- for all parts of the country. Farmers are learning this and beginning to call on us in case of need.

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"I see that part of it, Doctor", said I. "I can easily see how you may give that chap the rainfall and temperature figures for last Summer, say. But maybe last Summer was a freak -- not at all like the summers before that. The weather's pretty changeable".

"It is indeed", the Weather Man said as he looked out of the window at the rising clouds. "One season doesn't make the climate of a section any more than one swallow makes a Summer. But come with me and I'll show you some of our climate records".

Then the Weather Man showed me batteries of filing cases filled with records. He pointed out stacks of bound volumes, containing hundreds of tables of figures. It all looked like early Greek to me, but I was greatly impressed.

"Looks like you mean business", I remarked.

"We do. Sit down and I'll tell you how we go about this climate work", and the Weather Man led me back into his office.

This climatological work is done in what is called the Climatological Division of the U. S. Weather Bureau", he began. "Dr. P. C. Day is the head of the Division. The central offices of the Weather Bureau, as you know, are in Washington, D. C.

"The United States is divided into 106 sections for the purpose of this work. These sections are often outlined by the watersheds, but not always. Most states have more than one of the sections. The State of Utah, for instance, has 2, and Texas 5. The sections are numbered. Southern Texas is numbered 1 and Maine is numbered 106. All right. Now, in the United States, there are about 200 official U. S. Weather Bureau observatories. There are over 5,000 places in the U. S., however, where weather observations are taken and recorded and sent in to certain regular Weather Stations. At each station is an observer. At each official U. S. Weather Bureau Station there is one -- or more -- official weather man, or meteorologist. Do you see what I'm driving at?"

"I think I do", said I. "You're showing me how you make the climate."

"Not at all", the Weather Man protested. "I'm trying to show you how we record the weather from day to day. The day-by-day, year-by-year, century-by-century weather makes the climate of a section or a Nation. See?"

"You doubtless know that the meteorologists stationed at U. S. Weather Bureaus make daily records of the weather for their territory. These records

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are sent in to the central Weather Bureau office at Washington, D. C."

"What kind of records are they?" I asked.

"Records of the rainfall and snowfall -- heat and cold -- wind velocity -- length of season -- sunshine and cloud, that sort of thing. All the many conditions that go to make weather from day to day. All right. When we receive these records, we condense them and tabulate them for months and years. For each section, mind you. For each of the 106 sections I told you about."

"That tells, then, how much rain that section had at a certain time, doesn't it? I asked.

"Exactly", replied the Weather Man. "Or how cold or hot it was at a given time".

"How long has this been going on?" I wanted to know next.

"Officially, since 1871", he replied. "We have rather complete records since that time. Of course we had some records even before that. Many folks keep weather observations in their diaries or family records. But we have official records since 1871. These records are published -- for each section and for the Nation as a whole -- in regular printed reports, every month and every year. The Weather Bureau also gets out a huge report of the weather and climate of each section at intervals of about 10 years. The last one published brought the records down to 1920. Another one will be due about 1930. In addition to giving tables of precipitation, temperature, and things like that, it tells of the climate of the section and of any peculiar, or unusual, weather conditions such as floods, cyclones, droughts, extremely cold, hot, or dry periods. Do you see?"

"I think I do. Can a man get these reports, as well as other information on the climate and weather of any section he's interested in?"

"Certainly", the Weather Man assured me. "That's one reason why we publish the reports. Detailed information is furnished free by application to the Weather Bureau".

"Well, how do they use the information?" I asked.

"Let me give you one or two instances. Farmers thinking of moving from one area to another are interested in knowing what kind of crops can be grown in the place they plan to move to. Business men -- doctors -- lawyers -- all classes of people, use the information in some way or

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another. Vacationists are interested in knowing about the climate of certain places they visit, and invalids want to know where they can find beneficial climates.

"A big insurance company used our information in rating a western city for fire insurance. The company was interested in knowing the number of days there were in a year in that place when the wind blew 25 miles an hour or more, -- also the snowfall and the temperature of the city. Real estate dealers use our publications to show prospective buyers the climate in places where they plan to buy property. A city engineer in a western town used the Weather Bureau's rainfall records in determining the size of the sewer mains which were put in that city. Mains that could handle a maximum rainfall for that place were installed. Those are only one or two uses for the records. In addition, we can tell those who are interested about the hottest, coldest, driest, wettest parts of the United States, merely by referring to the climatological records".

"Well", said I as I arose to leave, "looks to me like a man can about choose his own climate these days".

# **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

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July 23, 2010