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CHATS WITH THE WEATHER MAN Friday, June 10, 1932

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Speaking Time: 8 Minutes.

ANNOUNCEMENT: Now for another of those chats with the weather man of the United States Weather Bureau. As the poet says, "What is so rare as a day in June. Then, if ever, come perfect days." However, with some of us, it is always too hot, or too cold, or too wet, or too dry ----------

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Dr. W. J. Humphreys, chief of the division of meterological physics of the United States Weather Bureau, says a lot of folks are like that. In January and February, they long for the good old summer time. Then when July and August come, their love of summer wilts with their collars, and they are not so hot for hot weather. Even June, you will probably admit, has its off days.

In our chilly, pessimistic moments we are apt to look back with regret toward the times in the dim and distant past when this old earth of ours had a decidedly different climate.

For instance, what a glorious world this must have been when the temperature in the Arctic regions was mild and, as the geologists tell us, semi-tropic plants grew in Greenland, and in Labrador, and in Iceland, and on what are now the ice-covered wastes of the Antarctic!

But Dr. Himphreys says that weather wasn't so nice then after all.

Even on a hot summer day, few of us would long for a very long spell of such climate as that back in the ice ages when, the evidence shows, great sheets of ice covered most of North America down to central Pennsylvania, the lower parts of what we now call Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, and all the Rocky mountains; while in Europe the ice covered all Scotland and the Scandinavian Penninsula and even stretched as far south as the Alps.

Well, that was too much ice. The very thought of it is almost enough to make you shiver.

Paradoxical as it may sound, Dr. Humphreys says the weather in this

old world was not nearly as bad at that time as you might think. Then those conditions actually existed, thousands upon thousands of years ago, there was too much ice in what is now the United States and Europe.

But that icy covering of northern Europe and America had its compensations. The desert "flourished and blossomed as the rose." Places in northern Africa, in Arabia, and in our own Southwest that are now deserts were well watered, well-covered with vegetation, and filled with an abundance of animal life.

As for the tropical regions, Dr. Humphreys figures that they were not much cooler than now, while the semi-tropical and desert regions were much more fruitful than at present. It was only the higher latitudes that were uninhabitable.

But while the return of such an ice age would have its advantages for some of the less favored spots of the world today, so much ice would be disastrous to the regions where human civilization is now most productive and flourishes best. There would be too mich ice even for those who get heated up over mid-summer weather.

On the other hand, how about the time when the now ice encrusted ends of our earth were free from ice? What would things be like if we were back in one of those periods when Arctic and Antarctic regions enjoyed a moderate to warm climate? According to the geologists, you know, our world has gone through several long periods or ice ages during which for thousands of years our land was largely ice covered. Then the ice would melt back nearer and nearer the poles until it was all gone.

In fact, I gather from what Dr. Humphrey says that we are just now approaching the end of the most recent ice age, which was in full swing ten or twenty or thirty thousand years ago. Our polar ice is melting faster than it is being formed. That is, the heat we get from the sun in summer melts more ice than is formed by the snows of winter.

All right, suppose we had already reached another of those iceless ages when the top of our world was covered with luxuriant vegetation. Dr. Humphrey says that total absence of ice would be far worse than another ice age.

In the first place, there would be less contrast between the equatorial regions and the poles. It is that contrast between the heat of the tropics and the cold air of the poles that gives us our present vigorous circulation of air. If the difference in temperature was much less than it is, the winds would be lighter, and storms less frequent and less violent, rains would be relatively sparse, and clouds would be few, and temperatures would be high.

That doesn't sound like such a bad world to live in does it? But wait a minute, until Dr. Humphreys gets through telling us about this world <u>without</u> Arctic or Antarctic ice.

All the middle part of the world, the tropical regions, he says, would still have rains of the thunderstorm type such as they now have, but there would be fewer of them.---Now I can hear some of my friends from the

tropics say that wouldn't be so bad either.

The higher latitudes, say from about 60 degrees on North, would have fog and drizzle.

From southern Florida to northern Newfoundland, from Morocco to England, all the continent of Asia, China, Japan, and all of southern Africa, and New Zealand, all the world now wealthiest and most abundantly inhabited, Dr. Humphreys says, would be semi-arid to desert. The North and South pole might be clothed in luxuriant vegetation and might enjoy a mild climate, but the part of the world we think of as "our world" would be pretty thoroughly baked.

The climate in an iceless age would be much worse than anything we now know, even in the middle of a hot Fourth of July. And another ice age climate would be only a little less tolerable.

So you see, no matter what you may think of the weather, this world that we are living in is mighty hard to beat.

As Dr. Humphreys points out, from the standpoint of plant and animal life, and us human beings, the best age of all ages, climatically speaking, is an age like the present. That is, an age when there is enough ice to cause a good vigorous circulation of air and plenty of rainfall, but not too much.

So no matter whether it blows hot or cold, or just doesn't blow, remember it has been worse, much worse, several times in the history of this old world of ours. We seem to have landed on this best world we know at the best possible time.

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ANNOUNCEMENT: We will have another chat with the weather man two weeks from today. These talks are brought to you by Station _____ _____ in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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