

Oct. 25

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Dr. Charles F. Brooks,
Secretary, American Meteorological Society,
tells of:

WINTER'S FIRST SNOW, THE SNOW SQUALL

The first snow of the season, which usually comes in the northern states and Canada before the autumn has actually merged into winter, is generally the snow squall. Dark clouds race across the sky. The wind is cold and damp and penetrating. A similar condition of the atmosphere in summer would bring mild local thunderstorms. But instead of pelting raindrops we have blustering gusts of snow, usually in big, damp flakes. As the ground still retains some of its warmth, the snow melts as it falls.

Autumn snowsqualls may endure for several days. We are in an area of low pressure, as a rule in a "trough" of low pressure, with highs both to the north and south, a condition which may not end quickly. A southwest wind has been blowing, bringing moist warm air from the Gulf Stream, and a west or northwest wind is bringing in cold air a half a mile or a mile aloft. As cold air descends here and there it violently lifts masses of warm air, the moisture of which condenses and crystallizes as snow. It falls in squalls, which may occur several times in an afternoon.

The first snow flurries in Maine were reported October 1st this year, caused by convection and the crowding of cool winds on the margin of a West Indian hurricane.

(Tomorrow: Wind Clouds)

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