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A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Dr. Charles F. Brooks,  
Secretary, American Meteorological Society,  
discusses:

A WARM AUTUMN IN ALASKA

The warmth of this fall in Alaska which allowed the Yukon to remain open and gold dredging operations to continue to the end of October is looked upon with interest by American forecasters. This is the time of year when heavy masses of cold air begin to accumulate in the Arctic and to drain southward in ever increasing quantity. The cold outflows that affect the middle latitudes of North America often come out of Alaska and Yukon Territory. Unusually cold air and high pressures are reported there a week or more before an Alaskan cold wave reaches Saskatchewan and North Dakota. In the autumn of 1917, prior to the extraordinarily cold winter of 1917-1918 in eastern North America, Alaska early showed the formation of the great masses of cold air which after a number of preliminary cold waves, broke forth in tremendous volume and engulfed millions of square miles to the southeast in its frigidity.

Such early accumulations there are lacking this autumn much as they were a year ago. Last winter was mild in the Middle West till February; but we are not to conclude that the coming winter will be likewise. The cold wave and heavy snowfall in the West, blocking traffic over a large area, near the end of October, was enough to show that we can be cold without importing the coldness all the way from the Yukon basin. The great mass of cold air that brought such unseasonably cold weather and early heavy snows in the Rockies and adjacent plateaus and plains came from the north Pacific by way of the Canadian Northwest.

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(Tomorrow: Northers and Where They Go)

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