

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

THE FORECASTER'S VERNACULAR

To follow intelligently the daily forecasts of the Weather Bureau a knowledge of the meaning of the vernacular is necessary. Few people fully understand it. When the forecast is "rain" it means any kind of precipitation in season, whether rain, snow, sleet or hail, though the forecaster will specify snow when he can. If the fall is less than one hundredth of an inch the forecast is considered to have failed. "Fair" means only the absence of precipitation. The forecaster differentiates as far as possible, however, between the kinds of fair weather expected, as "partly cloudy", "cloudy", "unsettled", "overcast", or "threatening", and he is correct if there is no rain to measure .01 inch. A sprinkle now and then does not vitiate his prophesy. The term "clearing" means that rain will probably fall during part of the time covered by the forecast.

When the forecast is "warmer" it means that the mercury will rise a certain number of degrees, varying for different seasons and different parts of the country, and similarly with "cooler". If no change is anticipated and the forecaster says "not much change", "continued warm", or "continued cool", it means there will be no appreciable variation up or down. The coming of a "cold wave" promises an amount of fall commonly considered as very much colder and to an unusually low temperature, varying with season and locality. For the region extending from southern Maine to northern New Jersey on the coast and westwards to Nevada the drop in temperature during the winter months must be 20 degrees in 24 hours and to a minimum of 10 degrees above zero or lower.

(Tomorrow: Winter Storms Move Fast)
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