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A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Dr. Charles F. Brooks,
of Clark University,
tells us:

MEDICINE HAT, "COLD WAVE FACTORY"

Medicine Hat, a little city in southeast Alberta, 2,144 feet above sea level and 300 miles east of the Rocky Mountains, has long been known as the "Cold Wave Factory". It chanced to have a name that appeals to popular fancy, and also is most favorably situated for pronounced weather changes. Its extremes of temperature are astonishing, from 51 degrees below zero to 108 degrees above. Its chinooks are famous; the temperature in winter having risen 70 or 80 degrees in a few hours, causing the snow to disappear miraculously. But the town is not a "cold wave factory".

The common Alberta type of storm first comes under observation in that province, but it may at times originate much farther north. It enters civilization where Medicine Hat is one of the first weather stations to feel it. The widespread Norther, which often penetrates with its icy chill into the Gulf States, usually comes down through Alberta, and so also many of the cold waves affecting the eastern United States break first over the stations in the Canadian Northwest. Even though the cold air that flows over Medicine Hat can affect but a small strip of country, the occurrence of a cold wave in that region is a warning to eastern North Americans that other, uncharted cold air masses may soon appear farther east.

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