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A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Dr. Charles F. Brooks,
of Clark University,
describes:

THE POLAR FRONT

When a low pressure area is passing and the colder west or northwest wind arrives, heralding fair weather, we may say that the polar front has come. It simply means that the blast which originated in accumulations of air in the far north has struck us, its front as tangible in its way as that of a wave of water.

One hundred years ago storms were considered to be the result of a never-ending conflict between polar and equatorial air streams. Later, meteorologists almost forgot this idea, but in recent years it has again won an important place in meteorological thought. The battle of the winds takes place on what is called the polar front, or the boundary between polar and equatorial air streams, and passes us every time there is a sudden change to warmer or colder. In the first instance, the polar front is in retreat before the onslaughts of an equatorial air stream, while in the latter, the polar air stream is advancing into the equatorial one. Sometimes, however, there is a change only from humid to dry air, or vice versa, without a temperature change.

(Tomorrow: The Winter Thunderstorm)

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Science Service,
1115 Conn. Ave.,
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