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A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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

THE GROUNDHOG SUPERSTITION

Tomorrow, February 2, is Candlemas Day, a feastday so old as to antedate the Christian era, for the ancient Romans selected the date to burn candles to their Goddess Februa, mother of Mars. Superstition has it that

"If Candlemas be fair and clear
There'll be twa winters in the year."

Out of this traditional belief has grown the legend of the groundhog, known in America as the woodchuck. This little animal is supposed to waken from his long winter sleep on Candlemas morning and crawl out of his burrow to view the weather. If he sees his shadow, the story says, he goes back for another six weeks or so of sleep, for the winter has a long way to go before giving place to spring. If, on the other hand, the sky is dull so that he casts no shadow, then it is said he will remain up and spring will come early. As a matter of fact, on a February 2 in the northern United States the woodchuck is apt to have a couple of feet of snow and ice over the opening of his burrow, and would have to do some tall digging before he would have a chance to cast a shadow. It hardly needs stating that the weather of any one particular day of a year can not indicate the weather of the weeks to follow.

(Tomorrow: Average February Weather)

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