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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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

FORECASTING FIRE WEATHER

Forest Service and Weather Bureau alike are concerned with the problem of forecasting fire weather. Besides the general forecast, intensive studies of local conditions are required. Mr. E. A. Beals, district forecaster for the Pacific states, says:

"The making of reliable fire weather warnings is even more difficult than the making of frost predictions; and in the latter case it has been proven that the most satisfactory method is to obtain all the information possible regarding the past weather, and then have a man on the ground capable of amplifying a general forecast to meet the conditions over a small area."

Special forecasts of fire setting thunderstorms are required in the West. Relative humidity of the air is a good index to the inflammability of forest materials in summer, though changes in the moisture content of woody substances are likely to lag behind changes in atmospheric moisture. Special instruments have been devised to register the weight of a forest moss or the expansion and contraction of a strip of rattan with changes in moistness. A study of evaporation also has proved useful in forecasting fire weather. Evaporation is dependent not only upon relative humidity, but also upon temperature and wind, factors which also enter into the question of fire hazard.

(Tomorrow: Dew Signs)

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