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A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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

OUR SPRING RAINFALL

If rainfall were evenly distributed throughout the year, the quota of the spring months should be 25 per cent of the annual total. A map indicating the percentage of the annual rainfall occurring in spring shows that, although in a considerable part of the country, spring gets its 25 per cent., along the coasts and Great Lake shores, and in the arid southwest, the spring rainfall is less than one fourth of the yearly, while in large areas of the western plains it exceeds 25 per cent. On the coasts, particularly in the north and west, we have in general the rainfall type characteristic of a marine climate, while that of the interior is typical of the continental climate. In spring, oceans and lakes are relatively cold. Winds blowing from the cold water to the warm land are heated and become drier, and so do not favor rainfall. This is not true, however, of the north Atlantic coast where many passing storms bring rain.

Besides the coasts and the Lake region, one large portion of the interior has a relatively small spring rainfall. Southern Arizona, New Mexico, and extreme western Texas get most of their scant rain from winter storms or the summer wind from the Gulf of Mexico. There is practically no stored water from winter snow to furnish moisture for spring rains. On the other hand, where such moisture is available a large belt in the southwestern plains and another big area in the northwestern plains and Rockies receive more than a proportionate amount of their total rainfall in spring. In those regions where rainfall is, at best, hardly adequate, and dry farming is practiced, it is fortunate that a good share of the rain comes in spring when it is needed for starting the crops.

(Tomorrow: Artists' Nature Fake Clouds)
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