

No. 466

A Science Service Feature

Nov. 7

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

By Dr. Charles F. Brooks
of Clark University

STORMS OF THE GREAT LAKES

"November, with a total of 45 severe storms in twenty-five years, is the month of greatest storm frequency on the Great Lakes. October, November, and December have each an average of more than one and less than two severe storms. Next in order comes September and March, with 23 and 22 storms, respectively. In June and August severe storms occur about once in three years and in July about once in four years. It appears from these figures that as the season of navigation approaches its close the storms increase in number and also, as a rule, in severity." This statement from a Weather Bureau bulletin shows why Great Lakes shipping and the Weather Bureau are so closely in touch at this time of year, and why our daily newspapers have been telling us of damage to Lake shipping, beginning late in September, with the foundering of a vessel and the loss of all on board.

"The most destructive storms of the Great Lakes come from the Southwest. As the storm center approaches the middle Mississippi or Ohio rivers the barometer falls rapidly and the (east to northeast) wind gradually increases to gale force. Following the passage of the storm center the wind shifts suddenly to northwest and the barometer rises rapidly. The gales that attend these storms are particularly dangerous on the United States side of the Great Lakes where they come as onshore winds, and in the winter months the danger is frequently added to by heavy falls of snow and subsequent intense cold. Storms from the Middle West or the Northwest are more numerous. Cyclones of tropical origin occasionally cross the Lakes, though never without ample warning.

(Tomorrow: The Lakes as Storm Magnets)

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