

No. 480

A Science Service Feature

Nov. 24

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

By Dr. Charles F. Brooks  
of Clark University.

AN AUTUMN HIATUS

After summer showers and autumn tropical cyclones are over, there is a period that is sometimes pleasantly fair but uncomfortably dry over a large region. This is the transition season that comes before the winter type of rains and snows begin. Some parts of the country, however, may be flooded by a series of storms concentrated on more or less the same track.

While the early storms and attendant rains were too copious on the north Pacific coast, eastern storms were notably lacking during late October and early November. North Pacific "lows" consistently ran towards Hudson Bay instead of across the eastern United States. A barrier of high pressure cut off the moist winds from the Gulf of Mexico for a time, as effectively as would a high range of mountains. In many places in the East the wettest September was followed by the driest October since records began, and the first week in November was practically rainless east of the Rockies. Under such conditions, the pressure rises and falls, the winds shift from northwest to southwest, clouds pass, a sprinkle of rain or snow falls, and the pressure rises again as the cooler northwest wind comes in once more. Dust lies on the ground and forest fire smoke now and then fills the air. We have sadly needed a few good "Texas" lows" to tap the moisture reservoirs of the Gulf of Mexico and Gulf Stream and bring some bountiful rains.

-----  
(Tomorrow: Pacific Rainy Season Begins)

All rights reserved by Science Service

SCIENCE SERVICE,  
B and 21st Sts.,  
Washington, D.C.