

No. 493

A Science Service Feature

Dec. 9

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

By Dr. Charles F. Brooks
of Clark University.

RECENT FLOODS AND DROUTHS ABROAD

The Red Cross has begun the publication of a quarterly summary of calamities the world over. A large share of the space is devoted, of course, to such widespread disasters as those following deficient or excessive rainfall. In the summer of 1924 floods occurred in almost every European country, as well as in western Asia, Japan, India, and China. During July and August north China suffered from one of the worst floods in its history, when the rivers overflowed their banks, spread over immense areas of cultivated fields, and destroyed several cities and thousands of villages. The paralyzed railroads and the impassable roads made it extremely difficult to get food to the starving population and many died. The rainfall in southern and coastal India was great: at Calicut, Malabar, for example, over 96 inches of rain fell in June and July, more than 50 per cent. over the normal. At Mercara 24 inches fell in a single day.

Drouths, mostly with high temperatures, occurred in south Russia, North and South Africa, Madras, and Chile. There was a famine in Madras and Tunisia. In northern Africa a desert wind, "sirocco", blowing with extreme violence destroyed a large acreage of vineyards. The scarcity of water in Chile resulted in a loss of 25 million pesetas. This drouth in Chile and those in North and South Africa appear to correspond to that of California, which is in the same latitude and which is similarly exposed to cool ocean waters on the west. All these regions are dominated by the sub-tropical high pressure areas which have been found to vary in intensity in unison. This seems to be because they are directly related in common to the expansion and overflow of air from the heated equatorial belt.

(Tomorrow: "Increasing Cloudiness and Warmer")
All rights reserved by Science Service

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