

No. 594

A Science Service Feature

April 7

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THE SUPPLY OF SOLAR HEAT

The sun does not provide us with the same amount of heat year in and year out. Though it is pretty steady, as heaters go, the intensity of solar radiation does vary measurably from year to year and even from day to day. A recently published report of the Smithsonian Institution shows that the sun is most active and the solar constant highest at a time when the greatest number of sunspots can be observed through the telescope. The last sunspot maximum was in 1917, then sunspots decreased to a minimum in 1923 and are now increasing again, following a definite 11 year sunspot cycle. Similarly, the solar constant, a measurement of the intensity of solar radiation, decreased markedly from 1918 to 1922 and 1923. From January, 1921, to September, 1922, the fall was particularly rapid and caused some alarm among misinformed pessimists who feared the sun might never recover. Now, however, the sun's heat is again on the up grade, though still below the average figure.

(Pick up one column graph in matrix form numbered 4-7.)

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(Tomorrow: When the Barometer Falls Fast)

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