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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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ASK THE WEATHER MAN

How many of us before making preparations on the preceding evening for an early morning jaunt telephone to the Weather Bureau to learn the latest weather news? Or if the headlines in the newspapers predict a cold wave do we verify the prediction by consulting headquarters before filling our firepots to the brim and covering exposed water pipes? To many people, Weather Bureau means Information Bureau, and a variety of questions are asked it, ranging from the sailing dates of European steamers to the day of the week on which Christmas fell ten years ago. On one occasion a young woman about to have a "permanent" wave inquired regarding the possibility of a thunderstorm occurring during the next few hours, for she did not wish to have electrical apparatus on her head if one were imminent! From a list of questions compiled at the Knoxville station, it is seen that sporting gentlemen often call to learn the present temperature in order to settle a bet. On one occasion after hearing the temperature, the ingenuous questioner inquired whether or not the Weather Bureau thermometer was a good one! Frequently the hour of moonrise is eagerly sought by night picnickers. People about to take trips are naturally interested in the weather at their destination, and govern their apparel accordingly. The gas company wants sunshine and cloudiness data each December to show patrons why gas bills are higher that month. Many calls of a more serious nature are answered daily as well. Construction companies want to know whether, as far as temperature is concerned, it is safe to lay concrete on particular days; relative humidity statistics are necessary before sites for furniture factories are chosen; experimenters often ask the barometric pressure. Of the many calls the most frequent are for high, low, or current temperature; next come inquiries about rainfall, then river stages, and wind velocity.

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