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A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THE NORTHEASTERN HIGH

One of the most common features of an April or May weather map is a large high centered over the Hudson Bay region and Quebec. Eastern Canada persists in staying cold in spring and exports many chilly days to the northeastern United States. This part of Canada warms more slowly than the drier interior because of surrounding ice-bound seas, its many frozen lakes, and its large accumulation of snow. The high pressure represents the cold heavy air over the snow and ice fields. This northeastern high sometimes delays or blocks the storms, or lows, which cross the continent. Lows which in winter normally pass out the St. Lawrence Valley are likely to take a track farther south. Because of this cold snowy region in eastern Canada, temperature contrasts between north and south are greater in the east than farther west where, in the wheat region, the smaller amount of snow has already disappeared. Stronger temperature contrasts mean stronger storms, thus lows approaching the eastern coast are likely to be intensified.

In the West, ice-covered lakes are generally smaller and less numerous, and so are the mountain snowfields. The plains and lowlands are so dry that the snow does not last long. The cold is nearest in an upward direction, and where highlands or mountain ranges stick up into this frigid region, spring snowstorms and cold weather occur. The lower lands, however, bask in the bright spring sunshine and suffer killing frosts only when the local nocturnal cooling greatly lowers the temperature.

(Pick up one column matrix 5-12.)

(Tomorrow: Weather Compass Turned)

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