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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

By Dr. Charles F. Brooks  
of Clark University

FOREST FIRES AND WEATHER

Every year the Weather Bureau extends its forest fire warning service farther. This year it is starting the work throughout New England, and in the southern Appalachians. When the forest litter becomes dry, good kindling is provided for a fire. When the wind is high, the fire, once started, will spread rapidly. Hot dry weather does not always mean immediate fire danger. After a heavy rain it may take several days or a week for the dead twigs, leaves and moss to dry. Therefore, a special instrument for measuring the moisture content of the forest litter is used as an aid in forecasting. Fully timbered land is generally the most moist and cut over areas the driest. Many fires are associated with lumbering. At times of extreme fire hazard, the Weather Bureau advises lumber companies to stop operations. One western company when first so warned during the occurrence of a dry wind, kept on lumbering, and suffered from a fire that day resulting in a loss of \$60,000. Thereafter, the Weather Bureau's warnings were heeded.

Usually there is little danger from forest fires while the temperature is below 50 degrees Fahrenheit, and the rain fall averages 2 inches a month, nevertheless, fire conditions can occur surprisingly soon after a flooding rain and cool weather.

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