

No. 767

A Science Service Feature

Oct. 26

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

By Dr. Charles F. Brooks
of Clark University.

EARLY SNOW THIS AUTUMN

This fall the first snowstorm of winter, with temperatures below freezing, came in many places before the first killing frost! The result was a most incongruous mixture of green leaves covered with snow, with white plastered trunks in the background. Very impressive were the rushing clouds of drifting snow mixed with leaves torn from the careening trees. This was October 9-10 in the northeastern United States and neighboring Canada. The earliest general snow in decades lasted for hours, whitened the ground over a large region, and locally blocked thoroughfares.

A great invasion of polar air took place the first few days of the month and covered the interior of the continent south to about latitude 40. Light snows occurred on its southeastern front. Then a southeastern coastal low appeared and in conjunction with other lows farther north formed an extensive low pressure region along the eastern seaboard northeast to Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and perhaps beyond. The flood of cold air over the interior at the same time took on a general southward motion from the Hudson Bay region and Labrador to the Gulf States. Everywhere the temperature fell sharply. In the northeast where a considerable amount of crowding took place so much of the cold air was forced to rise that snow was precipitated generally instead of, as usual at this time of year, on the mountains only. The falling snow chilled the lower air and the snow blanket put a temporary damper on the emission of heat from the ground. Several days passed before the snow disappeared and temperatures approached normal.

(Tomorrow: Northwest Wind Vs. South)

All rights reserved by Science Service

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