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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

By Dr. Charles F. Brooks
of Clark University.

HOW THE WEATHER MAP IS MADE

"Tenet, surname, bomb", clicks Boston.

"Emotion, democrat, birth", announces Albany.

There is nothing revolutionary nor political about these messages, although copies of similar ones found in a scrapbasket during the war occasioned some anxiety to the secret service. Two hundred code messages such as these are received at the Washington office of the Weather Bureau every morning between 8 and 9 o'clock. Translated, the Boston message reads: Barometer 29.94 ; temperature 64; northwest wind, clear; lowest temperature last night 62; wind velocity 18 miles per hour. And Albany's telegram is equally harmless.

From 8 to 9, the coded messages are going on the circuits to all regular weather stations, and especially to the district forecast centers. In these they are decoded and mapped as soon as received. At the Washington forecast center, for example, one man reads the messages, while several others put the data onto outline maps, and while two printers set up the large table of figures which occupies the right side of the printed map. About quarter to 9, the forecaster begins to draw the lines of equal pressure and temperature, to help him visualize the countrywide weather conditions. When the map is complete, it shows the position of areas of low and high pressure, the regions where rain has occurred during the last 24 hours, and the wind direction and cloudiness at each station, and sometimes warm or cold wave areas. A duplicate copy goes at once to the lithographer, who prints a large map in black and red on a blue base, turning it out within an hour or two. But long before this, sometimes even before 9:30, the forecast is ready for distribution by radio, or telegraph and telephone. Forecasts are now much more immediately available than formerly when forecast cards and flags were displayed or broadsides attached to trains.

(Tomorrow: Ocean Temperatures Across Equator)
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