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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

MAILED Dec. 19.

By Dr. Charles F. Brooks
of Clark University

SNOW VS. POND ICE

If the frozen surface of a pond is kept cleared of snow, the ice will be thicker than if a snow blanket is allowed to accumulate. Cold dry winters, then, are most favorable both for skaters and ice companies. In Siberia it has been found that ice over six feet thick forms not only in the far north but also in the dry interior where snow rarely falls. A series of measurements in one region in March compared thickness of ice with depth of snow cover on rivers. Where there was no snow the ice was nearly 40 inches thick, where the snow was four inches deep the ice was about 32 inches thick, and where the snow cover reached 22 inches in depth there was only 25 inches of ice beneath.

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SOUTHERN LOWS

Watch for southern low pressure areas! They are the rain and snow bearers for the lower Mississippi and Ohio valleys, the Gulf States, and the Atlantic slope. That is, they bring wetness if they move northeastward. Then there is a big draft of warm damp air in front and an energetic blast of cold air on the rear.

Sometimes it is hard to tell whether a southern low is going to move east or break through and come across the central valleys or up the coast. Then forecasts of rain or snow for northern sections may fail of verification. Even the cirrus clouds may move from storm directions and thicken - only to disappear again without more result than a faint hale or a sun-pillar.

Southern lows are most likely to stay south when there is a slowly moving energetic storm centered east of the Maritime Provinces and maintaining its control over the weather west to the Great Lakes. This maintains a moving barrier of cold dry air across the Middle Atlantic and northeastern states that holds the southern storm in check.

The northward advance of the humid air is limited, and the low must drift eastward. The South gets wet, but the North and Northeast must be content with but light snowflurries. One of the most pronounced examples of this occurred in mid-December.

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