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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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WEATHER IN MANUFACTURING COSTS.

It is difficult to say in what phase of manufacturing weather is not a factor in the cost. Basic raw materials, such as iron and wood, are distinctly more expensive because of adverse weather. Iron, coming largely from ore in northern Minnesota, cannot be readily obtained during the colder months. Wood is the more expensive for every spell of dry weather that allows forest fires to eat up a portion of an already inadaquate supply.

When a factory is built it must afford protection against the weather and be strong enough to withstand all gales and squalls, and the maximum expected weight of snow on the roof. Such protection and strength are more expensive in our vigorous climates than in milder ones. Insurance costs are greater also, to the extent that insurance against windstorm damage, and lightning-caused fire are required.

Heating a factory in winter is very expensive in the North. Low sun and maximum cloudiness together with low temperatures and strong winds mean a minimum of external heating and a maximum call for fuel to offset the direct losses of warmed air and the constant conduction and radiation of heat from the buildings. The creation of artificial weather needed for making certain goods, notably textiles and films, comes at a variable price depending on outside weather.

The efficiency of workers decreases in our northern winters. Absences due to sickness, slowness in getting warmed up on a cold morning, and reduced speed when temperatures and humidities are not at the optima, all curtail output and increase unit costs.

Finally, the weather-made fluctuations in the demand for the finished products now and then create large losses and expensive shutdowns.

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