A Science Service Feature

Released on receipt
but intended for use
April 20, 1926

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed April 13, 1926

By Dr. Charles F. Brooks
of Clark University

ARCTIC SUNBURN

The aviators who will explore the Arctic this spring and summer must look out for sunburn. Perhaps you imagine sunburn is confined to hot days in warmer regions. Not at all! Near the pole, although the sun is low, it is constantly above the horizon, giving a length of exposure never experienced in lower latitudes. In addition to this, flights are likely to be made in good weather when the air is clear and dry, affording ready passage to the short wave-length ultraviolet rays which cause the burning. Flyers are always more exposed than people on the ground for they have left below them the most absorbent portion of the atmosphere.

Summer is the cloudiest season, with the sky eight or nine tenths covered on the average in some parts of the Arctic, and fog on 10 to 20 days a month. In winter it is but half as cloudy and fog is nearly absent. Clouds and fog, however, in the Arctic are seldom as dense and thick as they may become in warmer regions where a larger percentage of the air is water vapor.

The aviator may expect snow in any month, but rain falls usually only from May to September. The precipitation is very light, averaging about 3 millimeters per month. It has been asked whether airplanes would not be endangered by accumulating a load of hoar frost in flying across the Arctic. Fortunately, this risk is less than in winter flying in lower latitudes, because near the pole the water content of the atmosphere is much smaller, owing to the prevailing low temperature.

(All rights reserved by Science Service, Inc.)

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