

A Science Service Feature

Released on receipt
but intended for use
September 3, 1926

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed August 27, 1926

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RAINFALL OF CENTRAL CANADA

From the semi-arid plains in southwestern Alberta close under the lee of the Rocky Mountains the precipitation gradually increases eastward, toward the Atlantic, from which the moisture bearing winds are less obstructed. The great Canadian wheat region receives an average of about 15 to 20 inches of rain and snow water a year. Even small hilly areas or interstream regions rising but a few hundred feet above the general level of the plains are favored by appreciably more rainfall than the valleys and lower broad expanses. Such a small depression as that of the Red River Valley of the North, which is so flat that you can see a barn "hulled down" as if it were a ship at sea, has a sufficiently lower rainfall than the surrounding lands to be evident on a precipitation map. The little known north has less than 15 inches of annual precipitation.

The vicinity of Lake Winnipeg has more rainfall, as does also the leeward, or eastern shores of Lakes Superior and Huron. The rainfall influence of warmer Lake Huron is much greater, however, than that of either of the other colder lakes. In southern Ontario near the east shore of Lake Huron, the precipitation generally exceeds 35 inches and locally appears to be over 40 inches. Much of this is in the form of winter snowfall, the water content of which is not accurately known, but which may reasonably be taken as approximately one inch of water for ten inches of snowfall. Much of the 100 inches or more of snowfall is the result of convection as cold westerly winds cross the warmer lake. Other parts of southern Ontario have about 30 inches of precipitation, which is ample for agriculture.

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