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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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FIRE-WEATHER FORECASTS

Next spring the Northeast is to enjoy a new kind of weather forecast for this part of the country. Work is now actively going forward establishing special weather stations, equipped with psychrometers and other instruments, and developing telegraphically reporting networks of stations so that next spring fire-weather warnings can be issued. No longer, it is hoped, will there be such anomalies as permits to burn brush being in force throughout a period of dry days, while when rain is falling no burning is permitted because of the preceding dry weather!

A system of cooperation is being worked out between the foresters and the U.S. Weather Bureau whereby the Weather Bureau will keep the foresters informed of the approach of hazardous dry weather if they will only send in their daily weather reports from well distributed stations. In this way, it will be possible for wardens to take early steps to fight fires that have not even started and to place restrictions on fire permits.

One important phase of fire-weather forecasting that still has to be investigated for eastern forested areas is the question of what constitutes different degrees of fire hazard in the different months. On this question foresters and others have been engaged for some time, but without yet having reached fully workable conclusions. It is likely, therefore, that the first forecasts will have to be in general terms. Later, forecasts for particular localities from which adequate humidity and fire data have been obtained and compared will be possible in more explicit terms. It appears certain that the new forecasts will, from the outset, pay their cost many times over in forests saved.

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