

A Science Service Feature

Released on receipt
but intended for use
April 30, 1927

! WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed April 23, 1927

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BUILDINGS AFFECT WIND

In New York City the Weather Bureau has two stations, one uptown in Central Park, the other downtown in the skyscraper district. Some years ago the downtown station, although 350 feet above the street, showed a 16 per cent. decrease in average wind velocity following the erection of a new skyscraper nearby. The uptown records, however, indicated no appreciable change.

It is unfortunate that maximum service, which means a downtown office, and unchanging exposure, which requires a park or out-of-town location, are not usually compatible. Since the immediate use of the weather record is of more value than its later one as part of a climatological series, the Weather Bureau tries to make the best of its city exposures. As new buildings rise, so usually does the Weather Bureau office, with its instruments. This is very convenient for a travelling weather man, for all he has to do is to scan the skyline of a new city, and pick out the Weather Bureau by its tower surmounted by wind vane and whirligig anemometer.

To the man in the street the more important effect of buildings on wind is the way it fairly funnels strong winds down to street levels, making some corners well-nigh impassable at times. The rush of wind has its destructive effect too, not only ripping down signs but also sucking plate glass windows out of stores onto hapless passers by. The concentrated wind velocities that occur on our streets would probably be found at times to exceed greatly the maxima that roar past the high anemometers.

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21st and B Sts.,
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