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July 2, 1927

A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER. ?

Mailed June 25, 1927

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Authority on Meteorology

THE BRUECKNER CYCLE

Professor Eduard Brueckner, who died the other day in Vienna, though by profession a geographer, was best known to meteorologists all over the world as the discoverer of the "Brueckner cycle" in weather phenomena.

In the year 1890 this authority published a work entitled "Klimaschwankungen" ("fluctuations of climate"), in which he brought together a great amount of statistical evidence indicating that there is a period averaging about 35 years in the fluctuations of rainfall and temperature; groups of relatively cool and rainy years alternating with groups of warmer and drier years. Though the average period, according to his figures, is 35 years, the actual strength of a single cycle may be as small as twenty years or as great as fifty years. The average fluctuation of temperature for the earth as a whole was found to be less than 2 degrees Fahrenheit, and the average fluctuation of rainfall about 12 per cent.

Various reflections of this cycle are believed to have been found in records of the advance and retreat of glaciers, in the prices of grain, in business cycles, in the thickness of tree-rings, etc., but there is a large element of uncertainty in tracing periodicities of this sort.

The idea of a 35-year weather cycle is an old one. It is mentioned in Lord Bacon's essay "Of Vicissitude of Things."

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21st and B Sts.,  
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