

A Science Service Feature

Released on receipt
but intended for use
July 5, 1927

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed June 28, 1927

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WINDS AND WEATHER FOR THE PACIFIC FLIGHT

Discussions of the flights recently accomplished or projected across the North Atlantic Ocean have rendered newspaper readers familiar with the "prevailing westerly winds" of middle latitudes, which make it easier to fly eastward than westward between the United States and Europe. Doubtless many people have an impression that these same winds are an adverse factor in a flight between San Francisco and the Hawaiian Islands. What are the facts?

The winds over the northern part of the North Atlantic, though prevailing westerly, often blow from other directions. The general drift of the atmosphere in this region is likely to be interrupted at any season by the passage of cyclonic disturbances, attended by winds that "box the compass". An aviator flying from San Francisco to Honolulu traverses a region in which the winds are far more dependable, especially in summer. Winds between north and northwest are likely to be encountered at the beginning of the flight, and there is but the barest chance of head winds. Five or six hundred miles from the California coast the flyer enters the trade wind belt. Thenceforth he should have plain sailing, with brisk winds blowing approximately toward his goal.

Fog is notoriously prevalent along the California coast in summer, but does not generally extend more than 50 miles to the westward, and its vertical thickness rarely exceeds 2,000 feet. Visibility is likely to be good over the rest of the route.

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