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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed December 16, 1927

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THE LAST ICEBERG SEASON

The United States Coast Guard has just issued a report on the last annual iceberg patrol of the North Atlantic, covering the period during which icebergs were a danger to transatlantic steamers. The cruises of the cutters engaged in this work began March 22 and ended June 25, 1927.

There was slightly more ice south of Newfoundland than occurs in an average year, but bergs were remarkably deficient around the Tail of the Banks and near the principal steamer lanes. The unusual distribution of the ice was attributed to (1) the predominance of northeasterly winds during the early part of the season, and (2) a marked inshore invasion of warm oceanic currents. There were about 365 bergs south of Newfoundland during the four months March to June, but the remarkably small number of only eight south of the 45th parallel. The greatest number of bergs around the Tail at any time was during the first week of April, when four small ones were located there. These were kept under surveillance by the patrol until they had melted. The last berg appeared off the Tail April 28, and thereafter these waters were clear of ice during May and June.

The fact that the total number of bergs was slightly above normal though the waters south of the 45th parallel remained so free of ice means that there was an unusual concentration of bergs on the northern part of the Banks, where as many as 100 to 150 were afloat during the first week of June. They disintegrated quite rapidly, and by the end of the patrol season there were hardly more than 15 bergs south of Newfoundland.

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