

A Science Service Feature

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: WHY THE WEATHER :

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TELEGRAPHIC WEATHER REPORTS

A remarkable variety of information is contained nowadays in the weather bulletins that are daily disseminated over the world by wire and wireless. The reports come from some thousands of weather stations. The briefest messages generally report the barometric pressure, the direction and force of the wind, the current temperature, the general character of the weather and the amount of rainfall for the preceding 24 hours or some shorter interval.

An item of information that has lately assumed much prominence is the "barometric tendency" - the ups and downs of the barometer during a few hours (usually 3) preceding the time of observation, as shown by the tracing of a barograph. Since the world war it has been customary to report "visibility" on a numerical scale, especially for the benefit of aeronauts.

In Europe the present tendency of meteorologists is to provide an embarrassment of riches in the messages with which they crowd the ether throughout the 24 hours. Almost every aspect of weather can be expressed in minute detail by means of the radiotelegraphic weather code that has been used in the Old World since 1920, with the additions subsequently made.

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