

A Science Service Feature

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! WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed February 28, 1928

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WINTER FLYING IN THE ARCTIC

The shortest route from places in the northwestern United States and western Canada to northern Eurasia is by way of the Arctic. This is one reason, but according to Vilhjalmur Stefansson it is not the most important one, why the aircraft of the future will seek high latitudes for flights between the two continents. The Arctic offers climatic advantages for air travel. Moreover - a point that is commonly overlooked - the winter is the best season for Arctic flights. Stefansson says:

"Taking the average for the whole year, fogs are fewer, fogs are lower and easier to fly over, precipitation is less, and winds are milder over the Arctic than over the North Atlantic. For at least half the year the superiority of the Arctic is marked."

The cold of the Arctic, especially in winter, is favorable in several ways. It minimizes the danger of the heavy deposits of moisture in liquid or solid form that have so often been disastrous to aeronauts. With rare exceptions, the winter precipitation of the Arctic is light, dry snow, which does not cling. The winter skies of the Arctic are prevaillingly clear. The colder the climate the less danger of lightning. Lastly the winter conditions of the far north, especially over the land, are unfavorable to the formation of the vertical currents that manifest themselves as so-called "bumps" and "air-pockets".

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