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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed April 11, 1928

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PROFITABLE USES OF CLIMATIC DATA

Two ways in which climatic statistics have recently been turned to good account are reported by Benjamin Parry, of the U.S. Weather Bureau office in New York City.

A firm advertising raincoats and other wet weather clothing had been sending its literature indiscriminately throughout the United States at certain intervals. Lack of returns from some regions led to an inquiry as to the cause. Mr. Parry produced statistics relating to seasons of rains and droughts and now the company no longer advertises raincoats in Arizona and California during their rainless months.

One of the railroads with extensive switching yards at its Hudson River terminus operates a special steam plant for keeping the switches thawed during the winter. This plant costs \$2,000 a year to operate. It had been the practice to start it going December 1 and to operate until March 31, regardless of weather. Mr. Parry showed the people in charge that the frequency of snowfall during the winter was not great and that operation for a small fraction of the time would suffice to keep the switches clear. Since only six hours was required to get up steam, the railroad now waits until possible snow-producing conditions appear on the weather map before starting the plant, and a great saving has thus been effected.

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