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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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WIND AND THE FIRE HAZARD

The effects of wind upon the inception and spread of fires have been the subject of many recent experiments. P. D. Sale and F. M. Hoffheins, of the U. S. Bureau of Standards, have made a number of tests with lighted cigar and cigarette butts placed in a pad of dry grass attached to a screen, and exposed to winds of various velocities produced with an electric fan. In 50 tests each with cigars and cigarettes in still air no ignition of the grass pads took place. In 17 cigarette tests in a wind of 1 to 3 miles an hour the ignitions amounted to 41 per cent; in 95 tests in a 3 to 4 mile wind they amounted to 85 per cent; in 63 tests in a 4 to 5 mile wind, to 51 per cent; and in 26 tests in a 5 to 8 mile wind, to 58 per cent. In other words, the existence of any wind increased the fire hazard, but there was no apparent relation between velocity and frequency of ignition. This was also true of tests made with cigar butts. No tests were made in winds higher than 12 miles an hour. The percentage of ignitions for cigarettes was about three times that for cigars.

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