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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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METEOROLOGY IN THE CANAL ZONE

The present official meteorological service in the Canal Zone is known as the Section of Meteorology and Hydrography, and has its central office at Balboa Heights. It is under the direction of the chief hydrographer of the Canal organization. There are two first-class stations; one at Balboa Heights and the other at Colon. These have full complements of instruments, similar to those used at regular stations of the United States Weather Bureau, and record all the principal details of climate. There are about 25 other stations that measure rainfall only. Half of these are equipped with self-registering rain-gauges, making continuous records.

Rainfall is, of course, the most important feature of the Isthmian climate, both on account of its large amount and because of its relation to the water-supply of the Canal. The rainfall is heaviest on the Atlantic side, amounting to about 170 inches a year at Porto Bello. A large part of the Isthmian rainfall comes in the form of heavy showers beginning after noon. On the Atlantic coast nearly half of the rain falls at night. There is a dry season of about four months' duration, occurring in winter.

Hail fell on the Isthmus three times in a period of nine years. The vast artificial reservoir known as Gatun Lake is the principal theatre of hydrological investigations, including regular observations of water stages and evaporation. The water in storage here is depleted to the extent of many billions of cubic feet during each dry season. High seas caused by northers formerly did much damage to shipping in the open roadstead of Colon, but the construction of a breakwater has made this a safe harbor.

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