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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES

The United States Weather Bureau and the Meteorological Service of Canada are examples of the official organizations maintained nowadays in nearly all civilized countries chiefly for two purposes -- the prediction of weather and the collection of climatic statistics.

A national service of this kind comprises a central station or institute, usually, but not always, situated at the capital of the country, and a network of subordinate stations, which are sometimes classified, according to the scope of their observations, as stations of the first, second and third order. They may also be classified, from a different point of view, as telegraphic and non-telegraphic stations. The former provide telegraphic reports of their observations, once a day or oftener, which serve as the basis of forecasts, while the latter are maintained chiefly for the purposes of climatology.

In some countries -- notably the United States -- there are additional classes of stations engaged in particular lines of work. These include storm-warning stations, river stations (which report river stages and rainfall in the river basins), stations for agricultural meteorology, etc.

Several of the principal maritime nations gather weather reports from vessels at sea; partly by radio, for forecasting purposes, but chiefly in the shape of meteorological "logs", which are turned in at the end of each voyage, and which furnish the raw material for the statistics of marine meteorology.

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