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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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MEASURING SNOWFALL

In measuring rainfall as an element of climate, meteorologists include snowfall, but the actual depth of snow must be reduced to its "water equivalent" before it can be combined with statistics of rain. One way of doing this is to melt the snow caught in the rain-gauge before measuring its depth. Another plan is to we weigh a sample of snow and compute the corresponding depth of water. If exact measurements are not required, an inch of newly fallen dry snow may be assumed to represent a tenth of an inch of water, or somewhat less. Old snow, even when not compressed by overlying layers, is always considerably denser, and its water equivalent is not easily estimated.

While the amounts of rain and snow are thus combined in statistics of total rainfall or "precipitation", it is customary, in regions subject to snowfall, to measure and record also the actual depth of the latter, as well as the number of days on which snow falls, and in some cases figures are collected to show the depth of snow lying on the ground (the "snow cover") day by day, or at longer intervals.

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