

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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DAMP WEATHER AND THE AUTOMOBILE

That automobiles run more smoothly in wet weather than in dry is a common belief among motorists. According to the United States Bureau of Standards this idea rests partly on a psychological basis, and partly on a real absence of squeaks, resulting from the lubrication of the springs by water. This is not, however, the whole story.

Recent tests at the Bureau indicate that certain mechanical factors are involved. It is found that an increase in atmospheric humidity reduces the maximum power obtainable and slows up combustion. The effects of both these things would be to give a smoother flow of power. The loss of power, says the Bureau, is proportional to the humidity and under extreme atmospheric conditions may amount to 10 per cent. of the total power of the engine.

"Although," we are told, "by proper adjustment of the carburetor equally efficient operation can be obtained irrespective of the humidity, in the absence of such adjustment less efficient performance will normally be obtained under conditions of high humidity."

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