A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed October 1, 1929

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Authority on Meteorology.

INADEQUATE RAINFALL RECORDS

Meteorologists are familiar with the fact that the rain in any one shower is exceedingly uneven in its distribution, so that equally well exposed rain-gauges a few miles or even a few rods apart often show widely different readings for the same period of time. Hence it is quite out of the question to install enough gauges in any region to secure even approximately complete records for a single rainstorm.

"The statistics of rainfall," says Prof. A.J. Henry, of the U.S. Weather Bureau, "give little useful information as to differences of catch at relatively nearby stations, except in a few cases. In the United States there is in actual use one rain-gauge for each 595 square miles, whereas it is estimated that a single gauge to each quarter-section of land (160 acres) would be required to give accurate figures as to the amount of rain that falls each year. The closest network of rainfall stations in the world, so far as known, is maintained on the island of Barbados, which has about 200 stations for its 106 square miles of area."

The British Isles average one gauge for 19 square miles and contain some districts with one to the square mile.

However, says Professor Henry, "for two neighboring rainfall stations in the same climatic region the amount of rainfall in the long run will be nearly equal, notwithstanding the wide differences that occur between the two stations in individual showers."

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