

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed November 4, 1929

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A SCHEME FOR REPORTING CLOUDS

There are only ten main types of cloud in the International Cloud Classification, but many subtypes are more or less widely recognized and some of these are associated with particular situations of wind and weather. As weather forecasters would like to have as definite information as possible about the kinds of clouds present at the various places shown on the weather map, a practical scheme for detailed cloud reports has been evolved.

The first proposal along this line appeared a few years ago in Dr. W.J. Humphreys' book "Fogs and Clouds".

"It is believed," says this authority, "that a much closer approach to agreement among cloud observers than now obtains, when the strato-cumulus, for instance, covers as many sins as charity, could be had by matching cloudscapes with cloud pictures, instead of naming them. To encourage such matching, for agreement is vital to understanding and profitable use, and also to facilitate recording and reporting, an arbitrary symbol, 'ab,' 'ac,' etc., in which the first letter stands for the type and the second for the subtype, should be given to each cloud represented, in addition to its name."

At the recent international conference of meteorologists at Copenhagen this suggestion was considered, and a committee was appointed to prepare a set of typical cloud pictures. Each picture will be numbered. Observers will report the clouds by these numbers. Both the observer and the forecaster will have before him a set of the numbered pictures, so that there will be little room for misunderstanding as to what kind of cloud was actually seen.

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