

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER. ? Mailed January 6, 1930

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ANOTHER "POLAR YEAR"

A memorable event in the history of science was the system of meteorological and magnetic observations carried out in the polar regions during the "International Polar Year" from August, 1882, to August, 1883, when fourteen expeditions, sent out by twelve different nations, were in the field; twelve in the Arctic and two in the Antarctic. The observations were made at fixed stations according to a uniform program, and the results were eventually published in detail, in a series of large volumes.

Meteorologists are now planning a second "polar year" for 1932-33 -- the fiftieth anniversary of the first one -- in accordance with suggestions of Dr. Simpson, director of the British Meteorological Office. It is proposed to reoccupy as far as possible all the stations established in 1882-83 and also establish a number of additional stations. Elaborate expeditions will not generally be necessary, as, with present-day methods of travel, there should be little difficulty in reaching the proposed points of observation, the observers will keep in touch with the world by radio, and the use of improved, self-registering instruments will obviate the necessity of large parties.

One of the principal objects of this enterprise will be to secure accurate up-to-date magnetic charts of the polar regions. Another major activity will be the study of the aurora. Most important of all will be the study of atmospheric circulation in the polar regions, both at the earth's surface and at high levels, and its relations to the circulation in lower latitudes. In the Arctic data from high levels will be secured not only by means of cloud and balloon observations, but also through the establishment of several stations on mountains in Greenland, Iceland, Spitsbergen and elsewhere.

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