

A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt
but intended for use
March 31, 1930.

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed March 24, 1930.

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ICEBERGS

The iceberg season is about to open along the steamship routes between Europe and America in the western Atlantic, where, thanks to the International Ice Patrol, no vessel has been seriously damaged by ice for many years.

The density of ice in icebergs is variable. In some the material is more snow-like than in others, and in still others much rock is carried by the ice, adding to its weight. If an iceberg consisted entirely of ordinary ice it would float with approximately one-ninth of its mass above water, since the weight of a cubic foot of sea water is about 64 lbs. and that of a cubic foot of pure ice 57 lbs. However, recent studies by Prof. H.T. Barnes of North Atlantic icebergs show that from one-sixth to one-tenth of the volume of an iceberg consists of air, causing it to displace less water than ordinary ice. Thus many bergs float with as much as one-third of their mass out of water.

Icebergs measured by Drygalaki near their source in Greenland ranged in height up to 450 feet above the water. The highest measured by the International Ice Patrol, in the Newfoundland Banks region, was 248 feet above water, and the longest was 1,690 feet from end to end.

The movements of icebergs are controlled mainly by the set of prevailing currents. The direct effect of wind upon their drift is negligible, owing to the immersion of so great a portion of their mass.

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