A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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Authority on Meteorology.

SOUTH PACIFIC DUSTFALLS

On October 25 and 26 of last year a dense smoky haze prevailed in the South Pacific island of Niue (Lat. 19 S., long. 170 W.). According to Dr. Edward Kidson, Director of the New Zealand Meteorological Office, this haze resulted from bush fires in Australia, 2,300 miles away. The winds that carried the smoke blew around a cyclonic disturbance, which was central in the Tasman Sea on the 22nd and in the following days passed eastward to the north of New Zealand. As in all southern-hemisphere cyclones, the winds blew in a clockwise direction around the center, and the strong west to south winds in the northwest quadrant of the storm made ideal conditions for carrying smoke and dust from Australia to the Pacific islands.

In dry weather smoke and dust from Australia is sometimes spread by the southeast monsoon far over the East Indies, lying to the northwest, and cyclonic winds sometimes carry great quantities of such material eastward over New Zealand. On October 6-10, 1928, dust of Australian origin stained the snow a pale chocolate color for hundreds of miles along the main mountain ranges of the South Island, where the stain remained visible for months. The amount of the deposit in New Zealand on that occasion was conservatively estimated at 200,000 tons.

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