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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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OCEAN WEATHER AND LOAD LINES

Rules concerning the depths to which vessels may be loaded at different seasons and on different seas have hitherto varied somewhat from one country to another, but a conference now in progress in London will, it is hoped, result in uniform practice in this matter.

The U. S. Shipping Board, in the current number of its Merchant Marine Bulletin, discusses seasonal load lines and especially the difference between the summer mark and the winter North Atlantic mark. Pictures showing vessels heavily coated with ice explain one reason why load-line regulation should provide for greater freeboard in winter than in summer. The chief consideration, however, governing the locations of these lines is the relative average storminess of the two seasons.

"Experience shows," says the Bulletin, "that during the winter season storm winds occur more frequently and blow continuously for much longer periods. The same force of wind may be encountered at times during the summer season but does not last nearly so long. A vessel is much better able to stand the buffeting of heavy seas for a short period than for a longer one.

"It is not the strength of the wind that causes the trouble so much as it is the heavy sea that the wind sets up. The sea grows with the length of time that the wind has blown with gale force from the same direction."

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