

Released upon receipt  
but intended for use  
November 11, 1930

A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed November 4, 1930

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,  
Authority on Meteorology.

WHERE SOME OF THE RAIN GOES

While part of the rain that falls upon the earth flows off directly into the streams and another part is absorbed temporarily by the surface soil and later returned to the atmosphere by evaporation, either directly or through the agency of vegetation, a third portion penetrates the lower levels of the soil, where it feeds the great store of underground water that forms the perennial supply of streams and lakes, springs and wells. In its downward course through the soil the rain water soon reaches a level at which the soil is completely saturated. The surface of this saturated zone is known as the "water table" or "water plane." The depth of the water table below the ground varies widely from one region to another, and it also varies from time to time in any one locality, mainly in response to fluctuations of rainfall. A locality where the water table coincides with the surface of the ground is a swamp or marsh. At the opposite extreme, there are arid regions where the water table normally lies hundreds of feet below the surface.

Below a depth of about six miles it is supposed that, on account of the weight of the overlying rocks, there are no pores or cavities in which water could collect; hence the underground waters of the earth are all believed to be above that level. According to Prof. C. S. Slichter, the total quantity of underground water is about 565,000 million million cubic yards, or nearly one-third the amount of water in the oceans.

(All rights reserved by Science Service, Inc.)

-----  
SCIENCE SERVICE,  
21st and B. Sts.,  
Washington, D. C.