A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt
but intended for use
January 2, 1931

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed December 26, 1930

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

ICE-STORM DEPOSITS

After a destructive hailstorm people ask, "How big were the hailstones?" In the case of an ice storm, which encases outdoor objects in clear ice formed from falling rain, similar interest is displayed in the maximum thickness and weight attained by the icy coating.

Startling figures have been published on this subject in the records of particular storms. An inch of ice on wires is common, two or three inches has often been recorded, and there are reports, substantiated by photographs, of much more remarkable deposits. A tree of average size may carry five tons of ice. In the great ice storm of February, 1922, which caused almost unprecedented damage to trees in Michigan and Wisconsin, an elm twig examined by Prof. W. E. Rogers, of Lawrence College, was found to weigh 132 times as much with its icy envelope as without it.

The needles of pines and firs are sometimes so heavily encrusted and so compactly frozen together that the trees look like solid pyramids of ice.

In the historical museum of the Bell Telephone Laboratories, in New York City, there is a plaster cast of the deposit formed on a telephone wire during the New England ice storm of February, 1898. The wire with its coating of ice weighed 3.2 pounds per linear foot.

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