A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt
but intended for use
February 7, 1931

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed January 31, 1931

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

CLIMATIC ZONES

The climatic zones of the earth now recognized by meteorologists bear but a faint resemblance to those of the old-fashioned school geographies -- the torrid, temperate and polar -- which are essentially astronomical. The broad divisions of the earth's surface that actually exhibit distinctive climatic features have a zonal arrangement but do not run exactly parallel with lines of latitude. A recent publication of the British Meteorological Office says:

"Eight principal zones are distinguished: Near the equator a zone of tropical rain climate, then two subtropical zones of steppe and desert climate, then two zones of temperate rain climate and, in the northern hemisphere only, an incomplete zone of boreal climate, with a great annual range of temperature; finally, two polar caps of snow climate.

"The equatorial zone is divided into the equatorial rain-forest zone, which extends over the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans as the doldrums, with rain in all seasons, and a belt of savanna climate on either side, with a well-marked alternation of dry and rainy seasons.

"The subtropical zones include most of the world's great deserts. Over the oceans they include the trade-wind belts and the horse latitudes. The temperate zones are divided into the Mediterranean climates, with mild rainy winters and hot dry summers, and the temperate rain belts, with rain in all seasons. On the eastern margins of the continents, especially in Asia, the subtropical desert zone and the Mediterranean climate are replaced by areas with a monsoon climate."

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