

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology

PROTECTION FROM BLOWING SANDS

In an interesting discussion of the weather handicaps of railways, Prof. R. DeC. Ward tells of the troubles experienced with drifting sands in certain parts of the United States and the protective measures that have been adopted. These measures are, in part, similar to those employed in fighting snow in winter. Sand must often be removed from the tracks by shovel or plow. Fences are built along the lines to protect from sand, just as they are, in many places, as a protection from drifting snow. Traveling sand dunes are often kept in check by planting grass or desert shrubs.

"A network of plaited brush or faggots," we are told, "has also been used as a covering over the loose sand. Railroads which follow sandy valley bottoms or the sandy shores of lakes must be protected in similar ways. Many illustrations could be given. Two of the most familiar, because noticed by thousands of travelers every year, are the board fences used along the railroads that follow the Columbia River valley, and also in the case of those on the south shore of Lake Michigan. Coarse grasses like those seen on the dikes of Holland, as well as acacia trees, have been used in California as protection against blowing sand. Travelers across the southwestern 'deserts' of the United States have seen the stones piled up around the bases of the telegraph poles to protect these against being worn through by sand-blasting."

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