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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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Authority on Meteorology.

THE LOCAL "WEATHER SHARP"

John C. Fisher, in charge of the U.S. Weather Bureau station at Syracuse, N.Y., is a professional meteorologist, but he takes off his hat to the man who, through long and intimate acquaintance with the weather of a particular locality, has become skilful in predicting its changes a few hours in advance without the aid of instruments or weather maps. Mr. Fisher says in the Cornell Rural School Leaflet:

"In every rural community there is at least one man who is noted for his ability to forecast the weather with greater accuracy than his neighbors. Whenever a Weather Bureau forecaster becomes well acquainted with one of these local 'weather sharps,' it is most likely that the forecaster will be asked, 'How can you, in your office in another part of the state, with but little knowledge of our local conditions, hope to make as accurate weather forecasts for this community as I can, after some 40 years of observation and study?' And the answer, very often, is to the effect that the government meteorologist cannot make better forecasts. That is, he cannot make more accurate forecasts for a few hours in advance; but when it comes to a forecast for one, two or three days in advance, the local man is at a hopeless disadvantage. Local weather signs precede the coming changes by but comparatively few hours, while the weather map shows impending changes several days in advance. If the local weather prophet will use the Weather Bureau advices, modifying them when his knowledge of local conditions makes that course seem advisable, he will be able to make a record for accurate prediction that few can surpass."

Too bad the government cannot mobilize the talent of those amateurs in behalf of the airway weather service, the chief function of which is to make accurate short-range weather forecasts.

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