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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed October 31, 1931

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A GOOD FLYING CLIMATE

Some climates are good for one thing; some for another. The climate of southern Arizona is exceptionally good for flying. Its virtues in that connection are set forth in a recent paper by L. C. Walton, of the U. S. Weather Bureau. One of the main commercial airways in that part of the country traverses a flat open terrain, with the exception of a low range of mountains on the Arizona-New Mexico border and a scattering of hills. Mr. Walton says:

"Throughout the greater portion of the year, a pilot flying over this territory at an altitude exceeding 1,500 feet is in a realm where the visibility is limited only by the power of his own eye. Haze, smoke, fog, low clouds, and other limiting agents are of such rare occurrence as to be almost negligible. Snow, sleet, and ice are practically unknown, and the only place they could occur would be in the upper reaches over the only range of mountains crossed. Dense fog, so feared in many localities, seldom obscures the Arizona landscape. It has been observed only 36 times in the past twenty years at the Phoenix Weather Bureau office, and the distribution by months leaves most of the year fog free. Five of the twenty years have had none at all. During the winter months an occasional blanket of smoke partially obscures the city of Phoenix but leaves the airport clear. At Douglas, Ariz., the smoke occasionally cuts the visibility to as little as 3 miles, but is never dense enough to offer a serious handicap to flying, as the blanket is not more than 300 or 400 feet in thickness. 'Ceilings' are usually unlimited, or at least, sufficient to allow a generous margin of safety."

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