

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed November 4, 1931

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OIMEKON

The village of Verkhoyansk, in northern Siberia, has long held the world's record for low winter temperatures, and the region thereabout has consequently been known as the world's "winter cold pole." A few years ago, however, a Russian geologist, Sergei Obruchev, encountered surprisingly cold weather in the late autumn in the district of Oimekon, near the headwaters of the Indigirka River, and was led to suspect that the winter climate there might be even more severe than at Verkhoyansk. Oimekon is a large depression enclosed by mountains, and conditions are favorable for the formation there in winter of a pool of stagnant cold air.

At Obruchev's suggestion a meteorological station was established in March, 1929, at a central point in the valley. Its position is 63 degrees 16/^{minutes} north latitude, 143 degrees 13/^{minutes} east longitude, and the elevation above sea level about 2,160 feet. The winter temperatures thus far reported from this station have all been some degrees lower than those recorded during the same periods at Verkhoyansk, so that, though it is too soon to say positively that Oimekon has colder winters, on an average, than Verkhoyansk, this now seems probable.

A point of some interest is that while Verkhoyansk is north of the Arctic Circle, Oimekon, which lies upwards of 400 miles to the southeast, is well within the "temperate" zone, already known to include hotter summer climates than any found within the tropics.

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