

A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt
but intended for use
December 30, 1931

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed December 23, 1931

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THE HEAVIEST SNOWS

The heaviest snowfall in North America is probably found on the upper slopes of lofty mountains in the western United States, but there are few places in those regions where regular measurements are made and the largest amounts may be much in excess of any figures hitherto published. At Ruby, Gunnison County, Colorado, 9,850 feet above sea level, the average for 10 years was 467 inches, or nearly 39 feet, a year. Tamarack, in the High Sierra of California, at an altitude of 8,000 feet, had an average of 459 inches a year during 16 years. Recent measurements at Paradise Inn, on Mount Rainier, and at Mount Baker Lodge, on Mount Baker, both in the Cascade Range of Washington, point to an annual average of more than 500 inches at those places, but the records do not yet justify more definite figures.

It should be noted that at none of the places mentioned is the annual precipitation (rain plus snow reduced to its "water equivalent") remarkably heavy. At Tamarack, for example, the average annual precipitation is about 50 1/2 inches; a value surpassed at many places in the northwestern and southeastern parts of the United States.

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