

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed June 28, 1932

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FACTS ABOUT FOG

The depth of a fog may be anything from inches to miles. Measurements made by the United States Coast Guard during the international ice patrol of the North Atlantic show that the fogs on the Newfoundland Banks are very commonly so shallow that the mastheads of vessels rise above them, though in some cases they were found, from observations with kites, to be from 2,500 to 3,000 feet thick. Observations on the mountains of the California coast show that the upper level of fog in that region rarely exceeds 4,000 feet. On the other hand, aviators flying between London and Paris have encountered fog more than 10,000 feet deep.

During the ice patrol of the "Seneca" in 1915 samples of foggy air were examined for the purpose of calculating the amount of water and the number of drops they contained per unit volume, as well as the size of the drops. A block of dense fog 3 feet wide, 6 feet high and 100 feet long was found to contain less than one-seventh of a glassful of water, distributed in 60,000,000,000 drops. During the densest fog of the voyage the diameter of the fog particles averaged 0.0004 inch; just about the limit of visibility with the naked eye.

Town fogs, such as the famous "London particular" and the fogs of Lyons, usually consist partly of smoke. Dense fogs of this sort occur when the conditions of the atmosphere are such as to cause the smoke to hang low over the city instead of being dispersed.

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