

A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt  
but intended for use  
January 20, 1933

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed January 13, 1933

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,  
Authority on Meteorology.

A NIGHT BATTLE WITH FROST

A graphic story of a frosty night in the California citrus groves is told by Frank Stokes, Jr., in the California Citrograph. A low thermometer on a mid-winter night, he says, means war.

"Thousands upon thousands of grim, silent heaters - inanimate soldiers awaiting the torch - long even rows of them in nearly every orchard throughout the citrus area. Then there are the scouts; men whose duty it is to ride hour after hour, night after night, from late fall till early spring, constantly passing over the same territory, reading the same thermometers over and over again. These men carry telephones with which they 'plug-in' at regular intervals, making frequent reports to their General who sits before a switch-board and calls out the farmers whose orchards are about to be attacked by the enemy.

"Now the battle is on. Bright patches of reflected light appear in the sky as orchard after orchard is 'fired.' Soon a rumbling, thundering murmur is heard - the louvre-noise of ten thousand heaters. The night becomes blacker and blacker as the hours pass. The stars disappear. The smell of oil is in the air. A blanket seems to be spreading over all the earth. One can almost swim in the air, it is so thick and heavy.

"Still the battle continues. Still that rumbling, thundering murmur, for the critical hour is at hand - the enemy usually puts forth his greatest effort just before ~~retreating~~ for the night.

"But at last the night is gone. What a morning! The day is here, yet there is no sun. An unnatural gloom hangs over all. The world is in cheerless shadow. Still the citrus men are happy; they have won the fight."

(All rights reserved by Science Service, Inc.)

-----  
SCIENCE SERVICE  
21st and Constitution Ave.  
Washington, D.C.