

A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt
but intended for use
March 18, 1933

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed March 11, 1933

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LOST AND FOUND

A sounding-balloon goes aloft, bursts and descends; sometimes scores or hundreds of miles from the place of ascent. The feather-weight recording instruments attached to it are wafted gently to earth, thanks to the parachute that forms a part of the outfit. With these instruments there is a card offering a small reward for their return to the meteorological station where the balloon was launched or to some other specified place. The number of recoveries is remarkable.

During the years 1921-1929 there were sent up from Abisko, in a sparsely inhabited part of northern Sweden, 156 of these balloons, and of these 66 were eventually found and returned, a reward of 10 Swedish crowns being paid in each case. In nine cases the finders saw the balloons coming down and thus had no difficulty in locating them. Twenty-four were returned within 15 days of launching, 36 within 10 weeks, 48 within 6 months, and 60 within a year. One was not returned until 4 years 7 months after its ascent.

The horizontal distances traveled by the balloons ranged from a mile to 358 miles and averaged 63 miles. Of the 66 records recovered all but one were perfectly legible.

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