

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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RAIN-MAKING

One of the popular recipes for making rain is to jostle the droplets in a cloud together by explosions until big rain drops are formed by the coalescence of little cloud drops. The scientific objections to this idea were stated as follows by the late Prof. R. DeC. Ward:

"The physical processes at work in bringing about our general rains are on an immense scale, and involve great masses of air, many cubic miles in extent. Our great storm clouds are produced by the forced ascent of immense masses of air. The water vapor is imported, often, from great distances. Producing larger drops in place of smaller droplets, locally, is not the line of attack for any effective result. Even small drops will fall if the ascending currents of air are weak and slow. Our general rains result from cooling, and continued cooling, of masses of air imported from a distance, and not from any local cause. Even if we could bring down, as rain, all the water in a great cloud mass overhead at any one moment, the resulting precipitation would be practically negligible. The experiments of nature which give the earth its beneficent rains are on far too vast a scale for man to deal with."

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