

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THE DYRENFORTH EXPERIMENTS

Most famous in the long and picturesque history of rain-making experiments were those carried out in 1891 and 1892 by Gen. Robert Dyrenforth with the aid of funds provided by the United States Government. The methods employed consisted of exploding dynamite, rackarock and a mixture of oxygen and hydrogen (sent aloft in balloons), and Dyrenforth himself believed that the experiments, though not conclusive, indicated that, under favorable conditions, rain could be produced in this manner. Scientific experts who observed the experiments, however, did not agree with him, and neither does any scientific authority of the present day.

The experiments were conducted under the auspices of the Department of Agriculture. In response to numerous letters inquiring about the results, the Secretary of Agriculture, J. Sterling Morton, sent identical replies as follows:

"Replying to your letter as to rain-making experiments, I have to inform you that in no case did they pass the merely experimental stage, and that the prospect of ultimate success is not such as to justify farmers or other citizens in rain-making experimentation. In this determination, judgment and opinion I am supported by the scientists and other alleged experts in meteorology, connected with the U.S. Weather Bureau.

"The bombardment of the skies for water, as carried on by this Department under the special appropriations made by Congress for the purpose, did not produce results calculated to inspire the hope that any method of concussion can be made commercially successful in precipitating the moisture from the clouds."

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