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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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A PERENNIAL QUESTION

Every other day or so somebody writes to a meteorological institution to inquire whether it is possible to bring about desirable alterations in the climate of a specified region by creating large lakes, reservoirs or other bodies of water. A correspondent of the U.S. Weather Bureau living in South Dakota recently wrote to ask whether the impounding of runoff waters in that state would "have any appreciable effect upon humidity, rainfall or temperature, or upon plant life and crops." The reply from Washington was as follows:

"Owing to the rather limited amount of the annual precipitation in South Dakota the area that could be covered by artificial ponds would be only a small fraction of the total area of the state, and the climatic effect of such ponds and lakes would be small. There would be some tendency to make the seasons a little later - spring late and fall late. But the amount of this effect would not be very pronounced as, perhaps, may be inferred from the climates of the adjoining counties, Clark and Codington of your state. Clark has very little water surface; Codington a great deal, and yet their climates are much alike."

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