

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed October 27, 1933

PRECIPITATION AND PRESIDENTS

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

The worst drought in American history occurred while Mr. Hoover was President of the United States. He was not reelected, and the drought may have contributed a little to that event. At any rate, his defeat is in line with ideas set forth by Dr. Robert Marshall in an article entitled "Precipitation and Presidents," published in *The Nation*, March 23, 1927.

Dr. Marshall analyzed a large fund of rainfall records relating to the northeastern and the western north-central United States, leading to the conclusion that when the rainfall during a president's term is above normal, his party generally wins the succeeding election, whereas if the rainfall is below normal, it does not. He says:

"Summing up the records of the two regions over a period of 100 years, in 22 cases out of 25 the quadrennial rainfall predicted the next president. The party in power was victorious after a precipitation greater than the normal, and was vanquished after a precipitation less than normal in 88 per cent. of the presidential elections. It can be shown statistically that were chance alone operating the probability of coincidence between precipitation and presidential succession in 22 instances out of 25 would be only 1 in 14,603. Consequently it seems almost certain that there is some significance to the observed relationship."

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