

A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt  
but intended for use  
January 19, 1934

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed January 12, 1934

"FORECAST"

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Authority on Meteorology.

The word "forecast" has been almost monopolized by weathermen ever since Admiral FitzRoy, when in charge of the British meteorological service in 1861, adopted it as the designation of an official weather prediction. The word had, of course, been in the English vocabulary long before that date in a more general sense. The Oxford Dictionary records its use as a verb as far back as 1388.

The lexicographers tell us that this word should be accented on the second syllable when it is a verb but on the first when it is a noun. Professional meteorologists, however, British as well as American, generally accent the first syllable in both cases. This is regrettable; for there is a certain elegance in accented final syllables, and a gross inelegance in the now rapidly growing American tendency to say "BEfore," REport," etc.

In America a valiant effort has been made to conform to the analogy of the simple word "cast" in making the preterite and past participle "forecast." In Great Britain "forecasted" appears to be the commoner form, even among meteorologists. Both forms are recognized by the Oxford Dictionary.

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