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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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REMOVING ICE JAMS

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The season of ice jams and resultant floods along the ice-blocked rivers will soon be here. In recent years the technique of removing these barriers by means by explosives has made much progress; indeed, according to a recent writer, it has been developed to the point where there is little if any reason why damage from flood water should occur.

To blast an ice jam requires from 50 to several hundred pounds of explosive, according to the conditions. When the great ice gorge at Niagara Falls was blasted away some years ago the total amount of dynamite used was 2,700 pounds, fired in two charges. This was an extreme case, in which the ice was piled 70 feet high.

The blaster works on the down-stream side of the jam, so that the current will carry the loosened ice away; otherwise the broken pieces may pile up and increase the height or length of the barrier. The best procedure, we are told, is to distribute the charges under the ice for several hundred feet below the jam -- besides placing charges directly under the jam -- and to fire them all at once by means of electric blasting caps, wired in series, and a blasting machine.

The large manufacturers of explosives furnish detailed instructions for such operations.

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