

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed February 16, 1934

DEPRESSION AFFECTS THE AIR!

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

Even the chemical composition of the atmosphere has been affected by the Depression. At Cornell College, Mount Vernon, Iowa, chemical analyses of rain and snow have been made regularly for many years. Writing in the summer of 1932, Messrs. S.F. Williams and O.K. Beddow, who have been making these analyses, said:

"The precipitations are collected in clean granite pans, away from trees and buildings, and stored in glass stoppered bottles. The town has no factories and, exclusive of the college, has a population of about 1,700. The sulphuric acid found, therefore, comes mainly from the coal used in private heating plants. It is worthy of note this year there has been a lack of sulphuric acid. We have never found so little sulphuric acid in the rains as we found the past winter. This may be due to the depression. The coal burned in heating plants contains sulphur which in burning becomes sulphuric acid in the atmosphere. The poor people burned wood which was furnished them, or cut it and obtained their fuel very cheaply. One of the local coal dealers claims he has sold no coal to the people living in the country. Hence the depression affected the atmosphere and consequently the precipitations."

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