

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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SCIENTIFIC "LONG-RANGERS"

Long-range weather forecasting is still, as of old, a happy hunting-ground of cranks and charlatans, but how far they are from monopolizing this field may be judged from the following facts:

The United States Weather Bureau issues regularly at the end of each week a forecast, couched in very general terms, of probable weather conditions throughout the United States during the whole of the following week. The British Meteorological Office occasionally supplements its ordinary forecasts, which are for periods not exceeding 36 hours, by a statement of the "further outlook" for an additional period of several days. The Meteorological Service of Canada follows the same practice. An institution devoted exclusively to the study and practice of long-range forecasting was established in 1929 by the Prussian Ministry of Agriculture at Frankfort-on-the-Main, under the direction of Dr. Franz Baur, a professor at Frankfort University. During the summer months this institution issues somewhat detailed and definite forecasts of the weather in Germany covering periods of ten days. Seasonal weather forecasts, relating chiefly to rainfall, are issued by official establishments in half a dozen countries, as well as by certain unofficial institutions of recognized scientific standing, such as the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, in California. In one case, that of the Indian Meteorological Department, the enterprise is not new, official predictions of the general character of the monsoon rainfall having been issued annually in India for more than fifty years. Research relating to long-range forecasting now occupies the attention of some of the world's most eminent meteorologists and the subject figures conspicuously in the contents of the meteorological journals. Two meteorological societies in Europe have lately held prize competitions in long-range forecasting.

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