

A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt
but intended for use
March 16, 1934

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed March 9, 1934

SEASONAL FORECASTING

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The most promising method of long-range weather forecasting appears to be that founded upon the discovery of numerous more or less close relationships between phenomena occurring, with fairly long intervals of time between them, in different portions of the world. A memoir just published by the Royal Meteorological Society, in England, on the relations of rainfall in eastern China to antecedent as well as contemporary meteorological conditions in other parts of the world is typical of a large number of recent publications along this line.

In India official predictions have^{been}/made ever since 1882 of the general character of the rainfall during the monsoon period -- June to September -- on the basis of antecedent conditions outside of India. In earlier years these predictions were not made by precise methods, but they are now mathematical, being obtained by means of "correlation coefficients" connecting the various data concerned.

The Indian monsoon forecasts only state, as a rule, whether in specified divisions of the country the rainfall of the monsoon months is expected to be excessive, deficient or approximately normal, and between 1905 and 1932 only about two out of three of these predictions were verified. Considerably better results are claimed elsewhere. In Southern Rhodesia, where predictions have been made since 1922, there have been eight years in which a substantial departure from normal rainfall was announced, and in seven of these the character of the season was correctly indicated. According to Sir Gilbert Walker, the leading exponent of this school of weather "foreshadowing," an especially reliable formula is now available for predicting the character of the seasonal rainfall in the notoriously drought-afflicted state of Ceara, in northeastern Brazil.

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