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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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RESERVOIRS AND RAINFALL

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The idea of building large storage reservoirs as a means of increasing rainfall in regions where it is now deficient or uncertain is a perennial one, and was frequently proposed during the drought of last summer. Meteorologists do not regard this scheme as hopeful.

Since evaporation from a water surface is not often as much as a quarter of an inch in 24 hours, nor the movement of the air less than 100 miles in 24 hours, it follows that a large reservoir, or even several such reservoirs, could not much alter the local precipitation. Again, weather records do not show definitely any increase in precipitation that reasonably can be attributed to the Salton Sea, formed some years ago, nor to the lake above the Roosevelt Dam, nor any other storage reservoirs.

As further evidence on this subject: Various neighboring regions differ greatly in the extent of their water surfaces and yet have substantially the same rainfall. A good example of this fact is furnished by the adjoining counties, Codington and Clark, in South Dakota. The former has many lakes, the latter hardly any, and yet their rainfall is substantially the same.

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