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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed Nov. 5, 1934

NORTH AND SOUTH POLES

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman
Authority on Meteorology

A correspondent asked: Which is the colder, the North Pole or the South?

On an average for the year the air at the South Pole is doubtless much colder than that at the North because (1) the South Pole is about 10,000 feet above sea level while the North Pole is at sea level, and (2) because the air at the former gets very little heat from the deep ice and packed snow beneath while at the North Pole a much larger flow of heat comes up from the water below even when there is a fairly thick layer of ice over it. The Arctic Ocean has often been compared to a great warm-water plant, which keeps the North Polar area from getting excessively cold in winter.

It is merely a guess, though a plausible one, that the coldest climate occurring anywhere on earth prevails at the top of Mount Nielsen, 15,000 feet above sea level, in the interior of the Antarctic continent. This suggestion is due to Dr. Griffith Taylor, the Australian meteorologist and Antarctic explorer.

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