

Released upon receipt
but intended for use
April 24, 1935

A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed April 17, 1935

THE SIROCCO TAKES A HAND

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

Weather has often shaped the course of history. A rainstorm is supposed to have cost Napoleon the Battle of Waterloo, and it is not impossible that the blowing of the sirocco at Stresa, as reported in press dispatches, at the time the momentous conference began there the other day, may have far-reaching effects on European politics. For ^{of} all winds that blow in the Mediterranean lands the sirocco is notoriously the most devitalizing and demoralizing. There are two kinds of sirocco -- one damp and the other dry -- and one appears to be about as bad as the other.

This wind comes to Italy across the Mediterranean from the hot deserts of north Africa and ⁱⁿ some localities it is further heated by the "foehn process" in descending a leeward slope. Admiral Smyth has left us an account of its effects at Palermo, on the northern shore of Sicily. "Although somewhat inured," he says, "to the heat of the East and West Indies and the sands of Arabia and Africa, I always felt, during a sirocco here, more incommoded by an oppressive dejection and lassitude than in those countries. At such times the streets of Palermo are silent and deserted, for the natives can scarcely be prevailed to move out while it lasts, and they carefully close every window and door to exclude it."

SCIENCE SERVICE
2101 Constitution Ave.
Washington, D.C.