

A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt
but intended for use
June 12, 1935

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed June 5, 1935

FLOOD CONTROL

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman
Authority on Meteorology

Over a great extent of the central Plains, where drought held sway, until a few months ago, excessive rains have lately swelled the network of streams that feed the Missouri River, causing, at the beginning of this month, much loss of life and property. Floods are a scourge because man settles low lands along rivers where, though floods may be rare, they are always possible; thus paralleling his hazardous tenancy of the slopes of a rarely active volcano. The only safe alternative to leaving such lands unoccupied is to find means of keeping the rivers within their normal bounds. Up to a certain point this is practicable.

The general methods of guarding against or reducing flood damages include:

(1) artificial improvement of natural channels to increase their carrying capacity, including provision of side channels or overbank channels for accommodation of flood flows; (2) confinement of flood flows by artificial works, such as levees; and (3) storage or retarding of flood waters in reservoirs. No one of these methods alone is capable of solving the flood problems of a great river system; the solution lies in the use of one method here, another there, and a combination of two or more methods where that best meets the requirements.

(All rights reserved by Science Service, Inc.)

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