A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt
but intended for use
Oct. 1, 1935

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed Sept. 24, 1935

ETHIOPIA'S RAINFALL

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology

The world is looking forward with anxiety to the end of the rainy season in Ethiopia, which will remove the chief climatic obstacle to an invasion by the Italians. While the country has considerable rain in April and May, and, in the extreme south, even earlier, the period of heaviest rains includes the months from June to September, and, in part of the country, October. The yearly total varies from more than 70 inches in the south to 50 inches around Addis Ababa, 40 inches around Gondar and 20 inches in the Mareb basin. Ethiopia's rainfall is of vital importance to Egypt, as the source of the annual Nile flood. The river receives a steady supply of water through the year from the great equatorial lakes, but in summer and autumn this is greatly increased by the contributions of the Blue Nile and Atbara Rivers.

Moisture-bearing winds from the ocean, cooled by expansion in rising over the lofty highlands of Ethiopia, supply the abundant rainfall of that country. The nearest body of water from which such winds could come is the Indian Ocean, but there is much evidence indicating that the prevailing winds during the rainy season blow from the southwest, bringing moisture from the Atlantic. According to Sir Napier Shaw, the rain-bringing air current is probably one that, beginning as the southeast trade wind over the South Atlantic, is deflected toward the east after crossing the equator along the Guinea coast.

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