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Wind and snow! With no wind, freshly fallen snow is easily measured because its depth on a level surface is the same everywhere except for changes in different places due to changes in intensity. When snow is falling accompanied by wind, it is not only blown into drifts, making it impossible to secure a true catch, but often the wind picks up old snow, mixing it with the new and making even approximate measurement impossible. Wind laden with snow has immense abrasive power, forming fantastic shapes much as wind blown sand cuts the native rock. Wind also compacts a snow mass and puts it into an unstable condition, the slightest disturbance causing an avalanche if the slope is sufficient.