

It Seems to Me

by
HEYWOOD BROUN

ST. PAUL, Minn., June 9.—Rain fell here in St. Paul the other day and that was an eight-column headline in all the local newspapers. Not until one leaves New York and moves into the farm belt does he become weather conscious. Once some years ago when I was promoting a show I used to pray for thunderstorms on matinee days so that transients could not go to the ball game or to the races.

But even then the climate never made very much difference. As a rule the storm-bound visitor decided to stay in his hotel with a good book rather than venture forth to listen to my monologue and the even more attractive features which "shoot the works" had to offer. Generally speaking neither rain nor snow nor sleet nor cyclones cut much into the life of the New Yorker. He makes his appointed rounds about the same as usual. There are back rooms in the metropolis which aridity never has touched. The habitus often is quite ignorant as to whether the great outdoors is providing drought or deluge. In fact I have seen some of the cave dwellers who did not know whether or not it was night or day, last Monday or next Friday.

Heywood Broun Heat No Joke

BUT St. Paul lives more clearly within the palms of providence and the blistering heat which has afflicted the middle west was no joke hereabouts. Farmers literally watched their labor of many weeks scorch before their eyes. Cattle staggered in the heretofore pastures and lay down to die.

Here is a community which knows every modern improvement. It can light homes with electricity and make water freeze into cubes. All the comforts and conveniences which science and research have to offer are at the command of the citizens of St. Paul and the farms which surround the city. But in one respect this modern civilization stands shoulder to shoulder with Abraham and Isaac and the kings of Egypt. It must look to the skies for its safety and salvation. The Minnesota farmer is no better off than the Indian, whom he supplanted in his dependence upon those deities who govern rain.

In fact the ramifications of the weather are possibly even more complex and complicated than in the ancient days. Floyd B. Olsen, the present Governor, stands a better chance of re-election because of the support which has come to him through the gentle dew from heaven. No sensible voter should rebuke a mayor, a Governor or a President simply because of lack of rainfall, but pluralities out here follow the weather report. Extreme international radicalism has been set back at least twelve months on account of local showers.

Rain Saves New Deal

THE farmer who has been burned out by the sun will be as patient as Job in his relations to the Deity. Church membership diminishes very little during droughts, but they are bad periods for Republicans, Democrats and even Farmer-Labor officials holding office. The Literary Digest immediately should issue a new poll for this particular section of the wheat belt. Rain has come in time to preserve the overwhelming popularity of President Roosevelt. One more dry week and the new deal would have been distinctly in Dutch in Minnesota.

Occasionally the tourist gets a chance to see the New York papers and from their perusal he gathers that certain statesmen are using the drought as an argument against the wheat curtailment program of the Roosevelt administration. I have noted the fact that in any disaster the victims likely are to lash out against the men in power, but there is not much logic in assailing Wallace or Tugwell on the ground that lands hereabouts lay idle during a year which promises to be well below the grain average.

If the farmer had planted more the only result would be that he would have lost more. He is not indignant over the fact that he failed to bend his back in certain meadows which have since become bake-ovens.

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Today's Science

BY DAVID DIETZ

A RECORD of weather and life, season by season, is to be found in the rings of the giant trees of western America. It is a record that takes man back to the discovery of America, back to the days of the earliest Indians, back to the glacial age itself.

Once science completely comprehends this record, many puzzles, not only concerning the weather itself but concerning the solar or cosmic forces which influence the weather, will be solved.

The pioneer in this study of tree rings is Dr. A. E. Douglass, professor of astronomy of the University of Arizona. It was my good fortune, some years ago on a trip through Arizona, to spend several days in Tucson, visiting the Steward Observatory of which Dr. Douglass is the director, and going over his work on tree rings.

Within the last few years, the Carnegie Institution of Washington has become greatly interested in the whole subject of cycles in nature. The institution has financed a number of studies, both of tree rings and of other phenomena in which the occurrence of cycles in nature can be studied.

If a cross-section of a tree is examined, a series of concentric rings can be found upon it. Each ring represents a year's growth. Dr. Douglass began to wonder, in the course of a drive through the Arizona forest, if by any chance the sunspot cycle influenced the annual growth of trees. If it did, the result should be found in the thickness of the tree rings.

Moreover, if such influence did exist, then the rings of the gigantic and ancient trees would enable scientists to push the sunspot records back many centuries prior to the keeping of scientific records. There was also the possibility that sunspots did not affect the trees directly, but acted through some intermediate climatic factor.

"If one carefully examines section of trees which lived together as neighbors, he will notice that the rings are not all of the same size, but that in many cases they vary a great deal in width from narrow to average and up to big," Dr. Waldo S. Glick of the Carnegie Institution of Washington says. Dr. Glick is stationed at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

"A passing acquaintanceship will reveal this variation in width," he continues. "Permanent friendship, however, will establish such familiarity with the individual rings of a single specimen that the identical rings can be recognized in an adjacent tree. Therein lies not only the thrill of discovery, but also one of the secrets of reading tree rings."

EVERGREEN trees, such as pine, fir and pinon, are most easily studied, according to Dr. Glick.

"With the coming of spring, the tree awakens rather suddenly from its winter sleep," he says. "Growth is rapid at first and the wood formed is light-colored and porous. As summer advances, growth gradually slackens. The light-colored wood merges into a band which is darker and denser. When winter shuts down, the tree 'closes shop,' so to speak, and all growth ceases so abruptly that a sharp line marks the outside boundary of the wood put down during the spring and summer.

"Therefore an annual ring consists of the light-colored wood, or spring growth, plus the dark-colored wood, or summer growth, and it is marked off by a sharp line at its beginning and one at its end."

From the Record

A COUPLE OF BOOMERANGS

THE plea of President Hoover in his campaign and radio messages for re-election was that he had kept the country on the gold standard and on a high tariff. These were the two things that had made it impossible for his administration to succeed.—Representative D. D. Glover (Dem., Ark.).

FIVE YEARS BEHIND THE TIMES

Depression Leaves Its Mark on the Army Air Corps

BY GEORGE DAWNS
Times Special Writer

INABILITY of army commanders, congressional leaders and other experts to agree on what should be done to correct the admitted deficiency of the army air corps leaves the corps today without a definite policy or clear-cut plan for the future.

The only hope of ending the chaos and uncertainty and of putting the corps on a straight path is in the Baker board, now meeting in Washington seeking to find the trouble and define the remedy.

The general staff has demanded funds for a malleable hard-hitting headquarters force of 1,000 fighting planes. Air corps officers, speaking as individuals, have recommended a chain of underground, bombproof air bases, with swift planes patrolling the borders of the nation. President Roosevelt requested and obtained \$5,000,000 additional for the corps, probably because he realized its condition and need for help.

Investigation of the nation's problem by the Scripps-Howard newspapers disclosed this uncertainty and dispute. It disclosed also that the corps is five years behind its schedule, sharply deficient in fighting planes, personnel and training. Opinions of individual military men and civilians as well as ranking officers were sought in an effort to provide as broad a picture of the situation as possible.

General Douglas MacArthur, chief of staff, told congress he wanted a force of 1,000 planes—this, of course, in addition to the present authorization of 1,800—because of the "relatively low proportion of planes that can fairly be classed as fighting ships, compared to the total number accumulated during the last five years."

The plan, he said, was based upon a study made by the "Drum Board," the five military members of which formed the nucleus for the present Baker board.

Those persons who ardently and steadily have campaigned for an air corps independent of army and navy control saw in the general staff plan a slight concession to their demands.

GENERAL MACARTHUR pointed out that one form of air defense—observation—is an inherent part of the ground forces. But back of these echelons, he said, should be a general headquarters force, under control of the commanding general in the field, equipped with the strictly fighting planes—attacks, pursuits and bombers.

The general visualized this tremendous reserve force as being prepared at a moment's notice to send to any area or areas and there repel invaders.

"They (the 1,000 planes) could be used in independent missions of destruction aimed at the vital arteries of a nation, or they might of necessity be divided up and used in detail."

General MacArthur's arguments for a strong air force were probably as vigorous as ever came from a veteran army officer trained in warfare on the land. He spoke, too, after long consultation and study of the problems with the members of the general staff, dominated by men experienced in the older forms of military service.

Planes are changing so rapidly in performance today. General MacArthur said, that within the next ten years "you will probably see such a marked improvement that one type will do the work that is now divided among the three types."

He traced the development of aircraft, predicted much larger and swifter planes, and said they might follow the form of growth that transformed the small naval man-of-war of decades ago into the great sea fighter of today.

For cohesion, co-ordination and to prevent their dissipation on minor missions, they are held together as a great general reserve under the commanding general.

General MacArthur said this force "could be used as a great deciding factor in a mass combat," and for rapid reinforcement at distant threatened points, such as the outposts in Panama or Hawaii.

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ceivably be forced in self-defense into a punitive role and that was when he said:

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DAILY WASHINGTON MERRY-GO-ROUND

By Drew Pearson and Robert S. Allen

This is the second in a series on the AAA. A Merry-Go-Rounder got an AAA job. In his first article he reported on the influence needed and on the "efficiency" of the famed night shift.

WASHINGTON, June 9.—There is only one class of workers on the AAA night shift which does not sleep a good part of the night. This is the civil service group, most of them elderly ladies who have spent their lives working for the government.

But even they, having not nearly enough work to do, spend a good part of their time chatting or reading books.

The one exception to this rule is a little old lady whose working moments are so rare as to cause comment. For some reason, never properly explained, she is nicknamed after the First Lady of the Land. And on those occasions when she does rub her eyes and look around, some one is sure to nudge some one else and with an air of surprise exclaim:

"Mrs. Roosevelt's awake now." Between the civil service workers and practically every one else on the AAA night shift there is open bitter rivalry. This is the home-town politicians who have come to Washington to make a name for themselves.

MOST of them are middle-aged, bald-headed, old-fashioned fellows wearing heavy watch chains, celluloid collars, clothes that are much too hot for Washington summers, and ready to look important but actually appear pathetically timid.

Arriving in Washington armed with letters from the home-town political bosses, they expect to get a foreign legation or at least land a commissionership on the federal trade commission; instead they are shoved off on the night shift of the AAA at \$1.40 a year with the promise, "Just take this temporary job until we can find something better."

Most of them would do more work if they could, and make overtures to the civil service workers to teach them the ropes. But the latter, knowing that their only salvation is the ignorance of their colleagues, are as communicative as Chesapeake oysters.

The civil service workers come chiefly from Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia; but despite their much higher efficiency they are being weeded out rapidly. Most dismissals are given without the required thirty-day notice.

Another clique unto itself is made up of college boys, most of them going to George Washington, Georgetown or any of the other half dozen universities in the capital, who keep themselves awake flirting with pretty girls or studying. They set the high-water mark for inefficiency. Some have allowances from home, which together with their government pay, permits them to drive to work in their own roadsters.

One night three of them were arrested in an automobile mix-up, when supposed to be on duty at the AAA.

THE final AAA clique consists of former census bureau workers, who know all the routine of punch cards, tabulating machines, and sorting machines, which reduce human labor to a minimum.

Because of this name of them have been elevated to the exalted status of assistant supervisors at \$2,000 a year, thereby earning the right to strut around the room, lean on desks of pretty girls, talk learnedly with the supervisor and in general display an exaggerated ego.

BUT there is little co-ordination between these machines. A stack of contracts will come through one; meanwhile two or three other machines are held up waiting for work. All night long it is a question of working thirty minutes, then loafing sixty.

Probably the root of the difficulty is that there is not enough work to justify night shifts. But the various punch-card and sorting machines are rented by the government from the Interna-



Newton D. Baker (left), chairman of the board investigating army airplanes; General Douglas MacArthur (upper right) and Brigadier-General William Mitchell.

largely composed of swift pursuits and deadly, load-carrying bombers, he declared.

As time goes on—as I say, we are treading untried paths—you might require a force very much larger," he said. "But, you might find, if the types coalesce, that such a force might be unwieldy."

The trend throughout the world, he said, has been toward greater stress on military air forces.

"All air forces, in spite of the incessant talk of disarmament and the efforts made at Geneva to curtail them, are increasing," he continued. "Of course, weapons

of war not only have a certain inherent need and necessity, but they are very sensitive to relativity; that is to say that the other fellow has, and the air trend has been up."

He took notice of the public wonderment when he deplored the lack of understanding as to the duties of the army and navy among the various interested groups because, he said, "it has resulted in friction and in contention and the growth of an idea in civilian circles that neither the army nor the navy knew exactly what they were driving at."

Everett Kalb heads Butler Men's Union

Former Treasurer of Group Is Designated in Election.

\$50, called to the attention of an assistant supervisor, brought the reply:

"We're not supposed to get that. That's the job of the advertising boys."

"Shall I make a note of it on the margin?"

"No, that's their business."

Usually the method of figuring the size of crop checks is so complicated that it is difficult for farmers to know whether the amount they receive is accurate. But three farmers in Springfield, Mo., discovered that they were being overpaid and turned the checks in to the county agent. How many other mistakes have been made is impossible to estimate, but they must be multitudinous.

These errors seemed to worry the civil service workers, most of them government clerks of the old school type who take a sort of cantankerous pride in their work. But even they, finding no one to share their point of view, now worry no more.

MOST of the contracts handled for cotton and tobacco. Comparatively few farmers had taken up the government's proposal on the curtailment of wheat acreage even before the drought. There are also a lot of crop loans on corn.

Take one of the latter, that of R. Cassens of Rock Rapids, Ia., to illustrate how the contract is handled. His estimated production for this year is 2,000 bushels of corn with which he intends to fatten forty head of hogs. His carryover for 1933 was 2,500 bushels and his 1932 carryover is still 800 bushels. On the basis of this he gets a crop loan of \$900. But most of these checks are mailed to mortgage banks, not the express within a few yards of a dynamited bridge at Reddip, it was reported.

Gracie Allen has become box office feature, is just too much. There was just enough of Gracie and Burns in "We're Not Dressing" Bing Crosby was in that cast, which did big business at the Circle. Without Gracie and Burns in the cast and with Gracie before the camera nearly two-thirds of the time, "Many Happy Returns" opened to even bigger business at the Circle yesterday than "We're Not Dressing." This week will decide whether it is Crosby drawing them in or the nutty team of Burns and Allen.

Gracie's gestures and remarks become tiresome in "Many Happy Returns." She has too many nutty things to do and at times she is careless. Maybe she wants to forget that she is always supposed to

get the bill passed the senate yet?"

"No, it goes to the senate from here. They will

knock it out in the senate and they won't get their \$7,500,000 campaign fund after all."

"Well, then," our correspondent asked brightly,

"what are you squawking about?"

And your correspondent, noticing a curious motion, discovered that he was rocking away in unison with the statesmen all around and about the marble chair.

Now at the Circle.

EV BRANNON Maurice will pre-