



Never Sees Shadow

WANT a sure-thing bet? Then lay any odds you like that the groundhog will not see his shadow. It's better than a thousand-to-one shot that he won't.

Mr. Groundhog is always too busy "pounding his ear" to pay any attention to sun or shadow on February 2, or on any other day thereafter until the snow is well gone and the earth warmed up enough to grow him some early greens to eat.

For the groundhog, or woodchuck as he is also called, takes his long winter nap until about the first week in March, over most of the country. Even down South, his earliest recorded appearance is February 7—a few days too late for Groundhog Day.

Of course, the groundhog never asked for the weather-man's job anyway, so it is small wonder he is not much of a success at it. The sun may shine in your neighborhood on the second of February, but a few scores or hundreds of miles away it is pretty sure to be cloudy. Since the seasons roll along pretty uniformly over the whole country, it is plainly impossible to predict their

staying or going by local conditions of a day. One could predict coming weather about as reliably by tossing a coin or rolling a pair of dice.

A final warning: there may be a groundhog kept in a warm house in the zoo. He's pretty sure to fudge on you,

staying awake all winter, and seeing his shadow every day—by electric light. Pay no attention to him. Such an effete animal, using such artificial means, can prophesy only what the weather will be like inside an electric refrigerator.

Science News Letter, February 2, 1935

METEOROLOGY

Weather Summary Shows How Bad Drought Year Was

JUST how bad the Great Drought of 1934 was, has been made the subject of a study of scientists of the U. S. Weather Bureau during the first fortnight of 1935, and is summarized by J. B. Kincer, chief of the division of climate and crop weather. (*Weekly Weather and Crop Bulletin*, Jan. 15.)

All sections of the country, except along the Atlantic coast, the east Gulf area, and the Pacific Northwest had below normal rainfall and much of the country had either the lowest of record or the total for the year approximated the previous low, Mr. Kincer states. Colorado, Indiana, North Dakota, Ohio, and South Dakota had the least annual rainfall of record, while Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming had only about one inch more than their previous low record. Thus approximately one-fourth of the States had in 1934 either the least precipitation of record or the annual totals approximated the previous low. Only one-third of the States had as much as normal.

Almost as important as the rainfall in producing unfavorable weather effects were the high temperatures, especially during the growing season, which made less effective the rain that did occur. It was an abnormally warm year

everywhere, except locally in the Northeast. A large northwestern area had the warmest year of record with some localities showing an accumulated excess of temperature as great as 2,000 degrees, or an average daily excess of nearly 6 degrees.

"The general soil-moisture situation obtaining at the close of the year was variable," Mr. Kincer continues. "Fall and early winter rains definitely relieved the drought situation everywhere east of the Great Plains, except in the eastern Ohio valley and locally in the Southeast. Also conditions at the beginning of 1935 are generally favorable from the Continental Divide westward to the Pacific Ocean, with the outlook unusually favorable in the north Pacific States.

"However, a large north-south area, extending in width from the Continental Divide eastward to the central Plains and in length from Canada southward to the Rio Grande, is still very dry with little or no improvement. At the same time in much of this area precipitation after the summer season is normally light and substantial relief naturally is not expected until the usual time for the spring rains to begin."

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METEORITICS

Iron Meteorite Found In South Dakota Field

AN IRON-nickel meteorite, measuring 16 inches in its greatest dimension and weighing 195 pounds 11 ounces, has come into the possession of the South Dakota School of Mines. (*Science*, Jan. 18.) It was found near the town of Norris, Bennett County, by a farmer. He was disking his field when the implement struck a hard obstruction, which on investigation proved to be a large meteorite.

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