

HOLD YOUR HATS FOR MORE BAD WEATHER.

Wasn't it Mark Twain who once said that "Much is said about the weather but very little is done about it." It is, however, not for lack of trying that nothing has been done about it. For centuries, weather has been one of the most fascinating subjects known to mankind and many people have not only advanced strange theories about what to do about weather but but have in fact tried out such theories. The shooting of high calibre shells into the earth, or squirting liquid gas or some other substance on clouds from an airplane to cause precipitation are examples of what has been attempted. If anything is ever done about the weather, the credit may be placed -of all places - upon the brow of that meek, humble and self-effacing class of persons known as the "bureaucrats." We refer particularly to Dr. Charles G. Abbott, for many years, the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution and National Museum who retired from active government service some months ago at the age of 72 to continue his studies in long range weather forecasting.

THEORIES OF WEATHER.

Dr. Abbott's notion may be said to be founded upon the old wheeze that "If the mountain will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain." In the case of weather, it might be said that if man cannot change the weather, he may be able to tell just what kind of weather we may expect and when we may expect it and shape his affairs accordingly. If the farmer for instance knew well in advance just what the weather would be in the spring of 1946, he would know quite well how to prepare for it and what to do in fashioning his plowing and seeding program for the year. Fruit growers would know just how to meet adverse weather conditions. Fuel dealers and producers would know how to prepare their plans and stocks of fuel. Gas and electric companies would know when to expect peak loads of consumption. On this theory, Dr. Abbott began laboring many years ago to determine if weather and temperature could be determined well in advance of any given season or year and as an approach to the problem, he began a study of the radiation thrown off by the sun. Maybe the duration and intensity of the sun's rays from one year to another might furnish a clue. But to prove that the rays of the sun directly affected weather conditions would require a lot of observation and measurement and calculation, not only in this country but in other countries. Then too, it must be done over a long period of time to verify the truth of any conclusions that might be drawn. So, for many years, he and his staff have been making observations and recording all kinds of data. You can well imagine what slow, laborious and pains-taking work it has been. But, little by little, some conclusions have evolved. The intensity and duration of heat from the sun changes as a result of many conditions including, of course, the activity of sunspots. It was discovered that sunspots have a regular cycle and reach their greatest intensity every 23 years. The more sunspot activity the less heat the sun provides and vice versa. This activity has to be studied and measured. To this endeavor, Dr. Abbott has devoted himself and out of it all, he predicted in general the type of weather we would have this winter and spring. The unusual factor of course is that such prediction was made several years ago. Assuming that such predictions can be made reasonably specific, advance preparation could be made against weather changes, all of which would be of untold value. Let's place the laurel upon a humble, meek, and self-effacing "bureaucrat" who has labored so patiently in this field of endeavor and who will yet refute the witticism of Mark Twain that "Much is said about the weather but very little is done about it."