

January, 1926, inclusive, with at least one tornado reported in each month. This is an unusual record, as ordinarily at least one fall or winter month of the year passes with no news of any tornado.

In regard to the losses of property and life by severe winds, not tornadoes, the year 1925 seems to have fallen somewhat short of the 1924 figures; these latter indicated 78 deaths and between 13 and 14 millions of losses, the deaths being fewer and the property destruction slightly greater than in the average recent year by such winds. The losses by windstorms other than tornadoes, especially the losses of life, are not likely to total much more per year than the figures just indicated unless the year happens to include an exceptionally severe hurricane of tropical origin striking some portion of the South Atlantic or Gulf coast.

A POSSIBLE WEATHER AND OCEAN CONNECTION

Temperatures reported by ship masters for October, November, and December, 1925, showed the highest temperatures of the Gulf Stream in the Straits of Florida for this season for at least 6 years. The departures were, respectively, 1.4, 1.5, and 0.5 degrees F. above the October to December averages for 1920 to 1924.

Since warm waters favor warm air and high humidities and, therefore, lower pressures and greater storminess, it is very easy to guess that these warm waters south, southeast, and now perhaps east of us had something to do with the following extraordinary features of our weather during the past few months: (1) stormiest, cloudiest, coldest and snowiest October known generally over the United States from the Rocky Mountains to the Atlantic; (2) storminess and coldness of the southern plains and Mexico east to the south Atlantic coast, November to January, including a very late tropical hurricane; (3) unprecedented disturbances of the North Atlantic and extraordinary snowiness of the North Atlantic states and Maritime Provinces from late January into March, 1926. Pressures in the mid-North Atlantic through February were extraordinarily low.

Of course, we cannot yet prove that these weather abnormalities were actually due to the warm waters, even in part; but if we were to specify ocean temperatures which would favor such weather, we should describe those observed.—*C. F. Brooks*, in "Why the Weather." (Science Service).

INTERNATIONAL MONTH FOR AEROLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS

Meteorologists generally will welcome the announcement that investigations with sounding balloons are to be resumed in this country during May of this year. In years past several series of soundings to great heights have been made, notably those at St. Louis, Mo., by the Blue Hill Observatory and later those at Omaha, Neb.; Huron, S. D.; and Avalon, Cal., by the Weather Bureau. During the war this type of investigation was temporarily suspended, partly owing to the difficulty of procuring suitable balloons, but largely because it was deemed wise to

concentrate on the more practical work of obtaining data in the lower strata of the atmosphere for the benefit of aviation. Since the war this survey of conditions at flying levels has been continued, the data serving the double purpose of furnishing current information for flying weather bulletins and forecasts and of forming the basis for special studies and summaries which set forth in considerable detail the characteristics of the atmosphere up to 8 or 10 kilometers.

The need for similarly detailed information at greater heights, well up into the stratosphere, is urgent. The data thus far obtained are not sufficiently numerous and are not suitably distributed through the year and over the country to show the variations in the temperature of the stratosphere and in the height of the tropopause with season, latitude and pressure types. For procuring the desired data several extended series of observations are necessary, some of them carried on simultaneously at widely separated points, and including in some instances successive soundings at short intervals through day and night. The coming series in May is the first of several which, it is hoped, may be carried out during the coming two or three years. This first one may properly be described as experimental or preliminary, in some respects. New meteorographs, designed by S. P. Fergusson, will be given their first thorough test, new types of balloons will be used and some other changes in incidental equipment and in methods will be made.

The month of May has been chosen because it has been designated as "international month" for 1926, by the International Commission for the Exploration of the Upper Air. Heretofore, this Commission has selected certain days, usually one a month, but in some cases 3 to 6 in a group as "international days," and effort was made to have all countries send up sounding balloons on those days. At the meeting of the Commission in London, April 16-22, 1925, a proposal was presented by the U. S. Weather Bureau to substitute a month during which soundings would be made daily or oftener, thus securing observations bearing a close relationship one with the other, for the scattered days whose data would represent only isolated samplings. The Commission compromised by agreeing to the selection of an international month while retaining also, for the present, the custom of designating international days in the other months. May, 1926, was selected as the first international month and the meteorological services of all countries were urged to make daily soundings during that month. The Weather Bureau will send up sounding balloons at Royal Center, Indiana, and there will also be available, as its part in the international campaign the kite, airplane (furnished by the Navy Department) and pilot balloon observations, (including those by the War and Navy Departments) regularly made at several stations widely scattered over the country.

The meteorological services of Canada and Mexico will also participate, the former with sounding and pilot balloons, and the latter with pilot balloons and airplanes. Thus, it is believed that North America will offer a very real contribution to this first effort to study internationally the upper regions of the atmosphere for a period of some 30 consecutive days.—*W. R. Gregg.*