

tions just as severe and in many respects more severe have prevailed on several occasions since 1888. As recently, for instance, as February 4th, 1920, we had a snow storm of which the Weather Bureau prints the following description:

STORM OF FEBRUARY 4TH-7TH, 1920

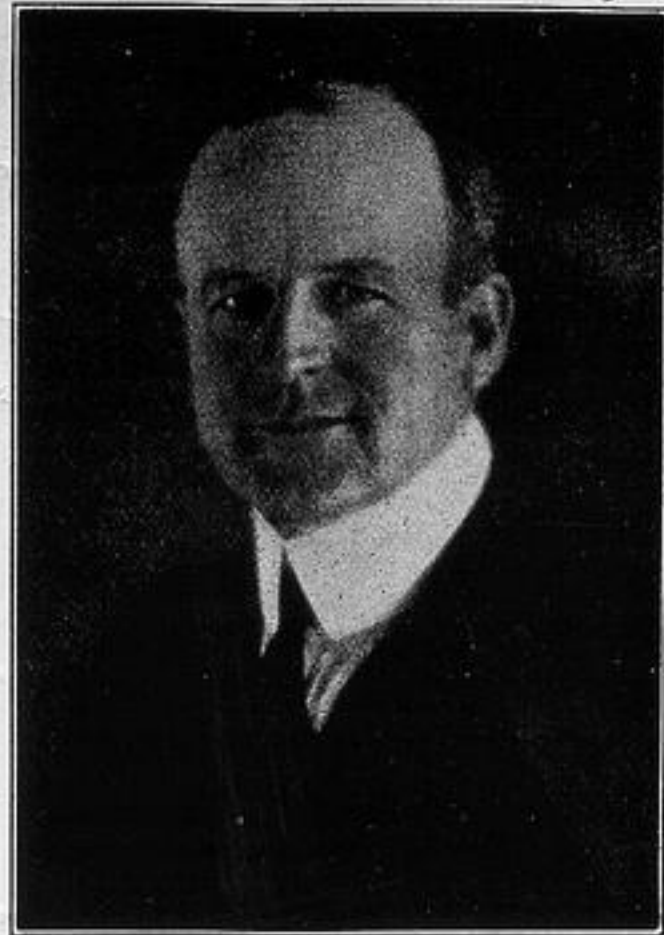
THIS storm, measured by the interference occasioned to the physical activities of the community, is the most noteworthy of which we have detailed record. Beginning in the early morning of Wednesday, the 4th, snow, sleet or rain continued almost without interruption for 77 hours, or till the morning of Saturday, the 7th. Measured as it fell, 17.5 inches were recorded; though the greatest accumulated depth was 15.0 inches on the 7th. The water equivalent was 4.45 inches, which is equivalent to nearly four feet of snow at average density. All the rain and all the melted snow or sleet were absorbed by the mass with practically no run-off; so that, neglecting the small amount lost by evaporation, the weight of the accumulated mass approximated 23 pounds per square foot of surface covered.

The mass, due to thawing and freezing and such traffic as proceeded over it, was reduced to almost solid ice, and was removed from the streets of the city with extreme difficulty. In suburban communities, except as street car lines chopped the tracks clear, practically no effort was made for its removal for several weeks.

A large number of the city's streets were practically closed to traffic for twelve days, some for more than a month, and the operation of surface cars was not resumed for six weeks.

This storm, like the storm of '88, and like the heavy storms of earlier periods, was due to a combination of atmospheric conditions that may occur at any time, but which do not occur with regularity or frequency. Consequently, misleading opinions are formed by the public generally who are not particularly interested in the records and whose memory of weather conditions is inclined to be rather short except where some specific condition has caused a deep impression to be made in their memory.

It is more likely, for instance, that the average man would remember a particularly severe storm that occurred when he was a boy, first, perhaps, because he was prevented from going to school by



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it, which is an event in the life of almost every boy, and, secondly, because the snow might have been deep enough to be up to his waist or to his neck, and no storm thereafter that does not reach to his neck compares with the one so deeply impressed in his memory. He is entirely forgetful of the fact that in later years his neck is much further removed from the ground. And, more than that, as he looks back through the years, his failing sight gives him a picture of that storm lasting from Thanksgiving until St. Patrick's Day, and no one can convince him that it did not.

Hardly any of this same middle aged crowd would remember anything about the storms of 1893 and, as a matter of fact, the snow fall during that winter exceeded the record of any year in the history of the Weather Bureau and, yet, because none of the numerous storms of that winter were particularly severe and because the temperature was not unusually low, the fact that it was a record-breaking year made little or no impression on the average mind.