

THE DECLINE OF METEOROLOGY

For some months we have become increasingly concerned about an apparent decline in the interest of soaring pilots in meteorology, and a general disinterest in soaring on the part of meteorologists. We are certain that both groups are the poorer because of this.

These lines are being written at Bishop, California, in the middle of the SCSA High and Wide Soaring Expedition, the week before Easter. Here the value of the closest possible relation between soaring pilot and meteorologist is very apparent. The pilots were very fortunate in having Harold Kleiforth, George Kornbluth and Dr. Werner Spilger all available for meteorological consultation and their prognostications the first four days have been confirmed as remarkably accurate.

From reading European publications and talking to those who know that situation firsthand, it would seem that our counterparts across the sea enjoy a much closer relationship with the meteorologist than we. In fact, with the exception of Barney Wiggin in Buffalo and John Aldrich in Los Angeles there are few U.S. Weather Bureau personnel who have any interest in soaring meteorology.

Any serious soaring activity will be much enhanced by good meteorological information, but the problem is to get it out of the Weather Bureau. All too often an inquiry about soaring weather will bring the response, "The soaring will be pretty good tomorrow. We are expecting winds up to 25 knots." Ridge soaring is probably only 10% of U.S. activity, but all too many Weather Bureau people think it is our sole source of lift. The solution here is education — admittedly a slow process. But it is time well spent if you can get a man or two in the local Weather Bureau office looking after you, and becoming familiar with the problems of thermal soaring. However, he cannot do this in a vacuum, and you will need to supply to him a continual flow of information on your experiences.

The research meteorologist is somewhat more difficult to integrate into soaring, but it can and should be done. Unfortunately, not since the Sierra Wave Project in the early 50's has there been any extensive cooperation between soaring and meteorological research groups. We would like to see more meteorological research experiments using soaring as a tool. Most soaring pilots know how meteorological knowledge can help them, but are not sure how they could help the meteorologist. Perhaps one of the latter could prepare an article for *Soaring* magazine on some topic as "How the Soaring Pilot Can Help the Meteorologist." Technical papers on soaring meteorology would also be welcome.

Both sides would benefit from a revival of interest in soaring meteorology in the United States. How about getting along with it?

H. S.