

that it has been rising and falling rhythmically for thousands and perhaps for millions of years. This being so it may be that we are at the beginning of a decline and that thirty years hence we shall be boasting about the mild winters we used to have back in the Nineteen Forties and Fifties, and the street-cleaning department will groan at the vast amount of snow that it has to remove.

#### OUR CHANGING CLIMATE

Largely through the publications of Dr. Hans W. Ahlmann, Swedish climatologist known the world over for his work in the Arctic regions, we have learned that the world has been getting warmer in the last half century. Spitsbergen's mean temperature was higher by ten degrees in 1950 than it was in 1900. Eskimos are catching and eating cod—a fish that they had never seen before 1920 or so. The White Sea and the Gulf of Bothnia are open to navigation three or four weeks longer than they used to be. In Iceland farmers are growing barley in soil that used to be frozen. Dr. Ahlmann's trump card has been the glaciers. They have been melting away of recent years at such a rate that the oceans are now higher by two-fifths of an inch than they were in 1900. If the icecaps at the Poles were to dwindle in a week to nothing New York's skyscrapers would be jutting out of the ocean and fish would be swimming in and out of their offices.

All this comes down to saying that we are living in the closing phase of an ice age which is 30,000 years old and that the icecap has shrunk from Virginia to Greenland and the Pole. The oldtimers who complain that winters are not what they used to be are right in the main, though they make the mistake of thinking that the local conditions with which they are familiar hold good for the world.

Dr. Ahlmann, a close student of this matter, now tells us that the world temperature seems to be leveling off. Probably it will take thirty or forty years to make certain. Suppose it turns out that the temperature is now fairly steady. What of the future? It certainly does not mean thermal constancy. Whether or not the temperature will go up or down nobody can foretell. There is good reason to believe