



HERE'S THE WEATHER MAN, FOLKS—Taking the "blame" for this winter's cold and snow storms in Whatcom county is Foster Brock, above, chief communicator at the CAA weather station at Bellingham airport. He is pictured all dolled up as he takes a temperature reading. —Herald photo.

Weathermen Tell How Cold Temperatures Hit This Area

To the average local resident, Thursday's snow was just more trouble.

But to those who could watch the weather reports from all over the Northwest, it was a by-product of a gigantic atmospheric battle that was taking place on a 300-mile front.

All day long at Bellingham airport's CAA communication station the teletypewriters beat out weather reports from points scattered from Alaska to Southern Oregon.

Thursday's snowstorm really began over the week end when a huge mass of cold air began to build up in the arctic interior of Alaska, according to Chief Communicator Foster Brock.

The cold air, a continental polar air mass, began Monday to shove its way down the Rocky mountain trench from Alaska. As it came it butted aside the warm air mass that had hung over the Northwest over the week end.

MORE COLD AIR

By Tuesday it was firmly entrenched over most of Washington and Northern Oregon. But even as it was turning the Northwest into an annex of Alaska, a rival air mass was developing in the Gulf of Alaska.

The maritime air was warmer—slightly—than the polar air. As it built up and started moving southeasterly, it picked up moisture from the ocean.

Wednesday morning the air mass

from the ocean bumped into the polar air over Vancouver island. Where the slightly warmer, moisture-laden maritime air hit the cold polar air there was snow as a by-product.

The maritime air met the polar air and began to push it back mile by mile into Alaska. By Wednesday night the two were battling it out over Bellingham.

As the snow fell on Bellingham Thursday the struggle continued to rage in the upper air. But as the temperature climbs it will show the warmer air from the Gulf is getting the upper hand.

What happens next?

WHAT WILL HAPPEN?

Well, normally the fronts from the Gulf of Alaska should pass over Bellingham in waves of snow showers later changing to rain, alternating with periods of clear weather.

The men at the CAA station would be the first to admit, however, that this is no normal winter.

None of them can remember when the polar air has pushed down from Alaska twice in the same winter. Chances are it won't come again this winter.

If things go according to past experience, Bellingham's worst winter should be over soon.

But somewhere above the Arctic circle there may be conditions piling up that will make the forecasters throw their weather history books out the window.