## CLIMATIC HIGHLIGHTS

Wet Weather Plagues Most Agricultural Regions P. Scholefield



Abnormally high amounts of rain were recorded during the month over the agricultural districts in Nova Scotia and the southern portions of Québec, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta and the interior of B.C. (see map on page $3 B$ showing the percent of normal precipitation). Medicine Hat, in the heart of Canada's drybelt, received an incredible 198 mm of rain which is more than six times the normal amount for September and exceeds the previous record for any month of 147 mm set in August 1927. This unusual period of wet weather across the country can be related to the anomalous upper level flow pattern over the country. Eastern Canada was affected by a strong
southwesterly flow of warm humid air while southern B.C. and Alberta were under the influence of troughs and abnormally low 50 kPa heights (see page 7B).

Southern Ontario Wet Spell Continues

The enhancement and continuation of the wet spell in southern Ontario during September was the most significant climatic event across the country. Rainfall amounts during July and August were nearly twice the usual values prior the deluges in September which dumped from 2 to
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This photo shows a typically saturated cornfield north of Toronto on September 30th

TOTAL MONTHLY PRECIPITATION (mm)


THE TEN WETTEST AND DRIEST SEPTEMBERS AT TORONTO (1840-1986)


Harvesting in the lush Holland Marsh just north of Toronto was
paralysed by the heavy rains as shown in this photo taken on September 30

## TEMPERATURE



## ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Yukon and Northwest Territories

Anticyclonic low level circulation and an associated upper-level ridge produced generally sunny weather over the Yukon and the District of Mackenzie particularly at the beginning of September. Daytime temperatures at times exceeded $20^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ even though there was frost at night. Despite the fact that snow was reported throughout the north, precipitation amounts were below normal with the exception of some parts of the southern Yukon and Baffin Island. Frobisher received 52.6 mm of rain in the first week which already exceeded its monthly normal. A new monthly snowfall accumulation record of 30 cm was established at Whitehorse. Strong winds swept across the Arctic Islands. In the high Arctic, temperatures rarely exceeded $0^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$. Heavy ice conditions forced the cruise ship "World Discoverer" (despite the assistance of an ice-breaker) to turn back after entering Peel Strait which separates the islands of Prince of Wales and Somerset.

## British Colurbia

Summer came to an abrupt end over most of the province after 10 days of variable but reasonable weather at the beginning of the month. It was at this time that the 53-day drought at Vancouver was terminated by some showers. Also, temperatures dropped below seasonal normals with some frost in the interior valleys. Several strong rainstorms (giving more than 100 mm in 24 hours) accompanied the arrival of autumn along the north coast. Heavy rains also affected the interior later in the month. Penticton received a record amount of 62 mm for the month of September. There were also some significant snowfalls recorded in the mountain passes. The wet weather caused delays in harvesting throughout the province.

## Prairie Provinces

Except for the more northerly regions, September was cold, cloudy and wet. An extremely cold arctic airmass invaded the Prairies at the beginning of the month. Temperatures plunged well below freezing during the nights. Several absolute minimum temperature records were broken. Thompson dropped to $-7.4^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ on the 9 th which was lower and occurred earlier in the month than the previous record. Wet weather with showers showed the harvest at mid-month created a risk of the grain sprouting before being harvested. The heaviest precipitation began falling on the 24 th. An intense storm from Colorado dropped 150 mm of water on Saskatchewan in 48 hours. This same storm helped Medicine Hat establish its all-time record precipitation for any month of 197.6 mm . The September normal for Medicine Hat of 32.4 mm was exceeded by $600 \%$ ! Two weeks of good weather are needed to complete the Prairie harvest.

## Ontario

After several fine days at the beginning of the month, heavy rainfalls arrived and continued for the rest of the month. Mean temperatures were generally less than normal. From the 6 th to the 8 th several daily minimum temperature records were set over northern Ontario and the first significant ground frost occurred in the south. Below freezing temperatures overnight in the north brought the growing season to an end. Southern and central regions fell prey to torrential rains, thunderstorms and even some hail. Rainfall accumulations tripled the normal value in some locations. Mont Forest (254 mm), Sarnia (246 mm), London ( 236 mm ), Waterloo-Wellington $(217 \mathrm{~mm})$, and Wiarton surpassed their previous all-time September records. Toronto however had the distinction of experiencing the wettest month ever during the past century and the second wettest month ever since records began in 1840. This prolonged wet spell saturated farm fields, delayed harvesting and in some cases crops rotted in the fields. Crop losses were in the millions. There was also flood damage to parks, roadways and residential basements.


## EXTREMES

## CLIMATIC EXTREMES IN CANADA - SEPTEMBER 1986

MEAN TEMPERATURE:
WARMEST
COLDEST
HIGHEST TEMPERATURE:
LOWEST TEMPERATURE:
heaviest precipitation:
HEAVIEST SNOWFALL:
DEEPEST SNOW ON THE GROUND ON SEPTEMBER 30th, 1986:

GREATEST NUMBER OF BRIGHT
SUNSHINE HOURS:

WINDSOR, ONT
EUREKA, NWT
$-11.6^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$

LYTTON, BC
MOULD BAY, NWT
$-20.2^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$
MOUNT FOREST, ONT
254.0 mm

WHITEHORSE, YT
29.8 cm

EUREKA, NWT
9.0 cm

VICTORIA GONZ. HTS, BC 209 hours

## Québec

The weather was rather cool and variable all month. In the south, the mercury dropped below freezing at the beginning and midmonth, setting several daily minimum temperature records. At Gaspé, the monthly mean temperature dropped to $8.2^{\circ} \mathrm{C}, 0.6^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ below the September 1978 record. Heavy rain was the most significant climatic feature of the month although some snow was recorded in the north. Although there were a few exceptions (over the north coast), the precipitation generally exceeded 100 mm . A large portion of the rain over the south was recorded between the 10th and 12th which occurred when an influx of humid tropical air from the south interacted with colder arctic air to the north. Deluges of rain at Saint-Agathe-des-Monts produced 96.7 mm in 24 hours which broke the previous record of 66 mm in 1985. Northwest of Montréal, at Lachute, a 10-metre high crack developed in a hydroelectric dam. There were also numerous flooding incidents and some road closures in rural areas. An all-time monthly record amount of 133.0 mm of precipitation was recorded at Inukjuak which exceeded the previous record of 107.2 mm in September 1970.

## Atlantic Provinces

September was cold. Mean monthly temperature differences of greater than $2^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ below normal occurred throughout the region except over Prince Edward Island. Several mean monthly minimum temperature records were equalled or broken: $10.8^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ at Moncton, $8.8^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ at Charro, a record for September; $9^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ at Gander, the lowest in 45 years. A storm on the 16th with gusts of wind reaching $93 \mathrm{~km} / \mathrm{h}$ caused electrical power failures in Nova Scotia. Newfoundland was also battered by this storm. At the end of the month strong winds gusting to $120 \mathrm{~km} / \mathrm{h}$ at Port-aux-Basques (157 $\mathrm{km} / \mathrm{h}$ at a drill rig on the Grand Banks). Most of the market garden harvests have been delayed or have a low yield ( $40-50 \%$ of normal) caused by the below normal temperatures which have persisted since the summer.

GROWING DEGREE DAYS


SEASOMAL TOTAL OF GROWING

## DEGREE-DAYS TO END OF SEPTEMBER

19861985 NORMAL
BRITISH COLUABIA

| Abbotsford | 1919 | 1808 | 1753 |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Kamloops | 2250 | 2163 | 2168 |
| Penticton | 2151 | 2085 | 2071 |
| Prince George | 1146 | 972 | 1183 |
| Vancouver | 1900 | 1778 | 1825 |
| Victoria | 1717 | 1638 | 1687 |

ALberta

| Calgary | 1295 | 1327 | 1339 |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Edmonton Mun. | 1525 | 1464 | 1358 |
| Grande Prairie | 1242 | 1226 | 1324 |
| Lethbridge | 1573 | 1633 | 1669 |
| Peace River | 1272 | 1190 | 1263 |
| SASKATCHEWAN |  |  |  |
| Estevan | 1670 | 1735 | 1786 |
| Prince Albert | 1405 | 1337 | 1444 |
| Regina | 1617 | 1569 | 1635 |
| Saskatoon | 1496 | 1545 | 1623 |
| Swift Current | 1546 | 1564 | 1510 |
| MNITOBA |  |  |  |
| Brandon | 1468 | 1459 | 1655 |
| Churchill | 534 | 615 | 569 |
| Dauphin | 1478 | 1418 | 1593 |
| Winnipeg | 1752 | 1663 | 1564 |

ONTARIO

| London | 2078 | 2127 | 2063 |
| :--- | ---: | :--- | :--- |
| Mount Forest | 1786 | 1667 | 1660 |
| North Bay | 1595 | 1612 | 1709 |
| Ottawa | 2032 | 2043 | 1992 |
| Thunder Bay | 1496 | 1396 | 1416 |
| Toronto | 2079 | 2056 | 2078 |
| Trenton | 2027 | 1987 | 2059 |
| Windsor | 2530 | 2515 | 2383 |
| QuEBEC |  |  |  |
| Baie Comeau | 987 | 1125 | 1164 |
| Maniwaki | 1509 | 1639 | 1597 |
| Montréal | 1995 | 2031 | 2069 |
| Quebec | 1590 | 1737 | 1710 |
| Sept-Iles | 949 | 1122 | 1047 |
| Sherbrooke | 1625 | 1648 | 1829 |

NEW BRUNSWICK

| Charlo | 1253 | 1468 | 1486 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Fredericton | 1500 | 1736 | 1721 |
| Moncton | 1478 | 1618 | 1633 |
| mova scotia |  |  |  |
| Sydney | 1283 | 1463 | 1464 |
| Truro | 1403 | 1494 | 1475 |
| Yarmouth | 1460 | 1469 | 1452 |
| PRINCE EDHARD | ISLAND |  |  |
| Charlottetown | 1473 | 1596 | 1545 |
| MEWFOUNDLAN |  |  |  |
| Gander | 1161 | 1206 | 1225 |
| St. John's | 1059 | 1108 | 1105 |
| Stephenville | 1244 | 1293 | 1254 |

SEASONAL TOTAL OF HEATING DEGREE-DAYS TO END OF SEPTEMBER


## ATMOSPHERIC CIRCULATION



Mean 50 kPa height anomaly (dam)
September 1986


Mean 50 kPa heights (dam)
September 1986

## MEAN 50 kPa CIRCULATION <br> September 1986

During the month of September 1986, the 50 kPa heights generally decreased with the seasonal reduction in solar heating over the northern hemisphere. Even though there was a general reduction in heights, it was not equally distributed. In fact there were two zones, over the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, where heights were higher than the preceding month. This resulted in an intensification of the mean monthly circulation with differences from the long term normal heights being more marked than in August.

The height anomaly analysis shows two pronounced negative anomalies over the east and west coasts which relate directly to the deepening troughs in the same
locations. The two positive height anomalies over the oceans at $30^{\circ} \mathrm{W}$ and $150^{\circ} \mathrm{W}$ are both greater than 10 dam which is exceptionally high for mean monthly values. One of the negative anomalies corresponds to the unusual position of the planetary trough along the west coast and the other to the inflection of the normal eastern Canadian trough which extends in a SE direction off the coast of Newfoundland. On each side of these troughs, which extend the length of the continent, are two ridges which are abnormal in their location and amplitude. These ridges over the Gulf of Alaska and Greenland appeared last month and have remained quasi-stationary all month. Their amplified values are
characteristic of a blocking circulation. This persistent circulation pattern led to the enhancement of five well-marked hemispheric waves in the maritime flow stream.

At the surface, the effect of these anomalies was noticeable across the country. In the west the flow stream was split into a polar and a maritime component with the northern component bringing below normal temperatures to British Columbia and southern Alberta. Further eastward, these two streams converged over southern Ontario producing favourable conditions for heavy precipitation and the resulting problems for farmers.
A. Caillet, CCRM

## ARTICLE

## SUMPER OF '86 IN REVIEW

by
Amir Shabbar, CCRM
The season was dismally cool and wet in eastern Canada but provided

## good vacation weather on the west coast.

In western Canada, timely rains ended two year of drought on the Prairies. The rain and cool weather also kept the outbreak of forest fires to a minimum. Late summer warmth and dry weather provided ideal conditions for thousands of tourists to visit Expo '86.

## Temperature

$A$ vast area of the nation from the Rockies through the Great Lakes Basin to the East Coast and including the Arctic experienced cooler than normal summer. The temperatures were near normal in southern British Columbia. Temperature departures were not large - less than $2^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ at the majority of
the climate stations. Cool weather about $1^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ below normal persisted from the lower Great Lakes to the Maritimes. Southern Ontario sweltered during a brief two-day heat wave, July 6-7, when maximum temperatures reached a record $34^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ and the humidex registered an uncomfortable $41^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$. The highest temperature was $38^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ in August at Lytton, British Columbia, while the lowest reading was $-7^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ at Resolute, N.W.T. in the same month.

## Precipitation

Much of Canada experienced a wetter than normal year. Precipitation was as much as 130 to 160 per cent of normal over the Great Lakes Basin and the Maritimes and


Heavy rains inundated faralands in southern Ontario this sumer. Crop damage from rains was established at $\mathbf{\$ 1 0 0}$ million.


Major climatic impacts during the summer of 1986
up to 150 per cent of normal in southeastern British Columbia. Southern portions of the Mackenzie Valley and northern Manitoba received more precipitation than usual. Alberta experienced record high July precipitation which was as much as 300 mm in west central forest regions. Higher elevations of the Alberta foothills received around 25 cm of snow between July 16 and 19. The west Coast, southwestern Prairies and northwestern Ontario experienced drier than normal weather. Both Victoria and Vancouver recorded no measurable precipitation during August setting new monthly records.

## Significant climatic impacts

Summer's cool and damp weather disappointed most Canadians this year. From the Great Lakes to Newfoundland, heavy rains caused local flooding and kept some farmlands waterlogged. The Atlantic provinces endured one of the most dismal summers this year; month after month record-low temperatures were set as the mercury fell several degrees below normal. Sydney, Nova Scotia recorded its coldest July ever $\left(15^{\circ} \mathrm{C}\right)$. Late frost damaged some sensitive crops in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. In June, frost destroyed blueberry crop worth $\$ 3$ million at Lake St. John, Québec.

Heavy rains inundated southern Ontario during late summer, including major roadways in Toronto where it was the wettest summer since 1928 - 356 mm . Moosonee on Hudson Bay received a record 189 mm of rain in July.

Southern Ontario had numerous outbreaks of severe weather. On June 16, a violent tornado ripped through the two of Minden. Along the 80 km track, 50 to 100 cottages were damaged or destroyed. On August 1, golfball-size hailstones destroyed tender fruits and vegetables in the Holland Marsh and the Niagara Peninsula, crop damage was estimated at $\$ 20$ millions.

Damaging winds, destructive hailstorm and violent tornadoes caused widespread crop and property damage in the southeastern Prairies in July and August. July was excessively wet on the


Prairies and one of the wettest on record in Saskatchewan. Central Alberta received more than 300 mm of rain, of which better than half the amount fell between July 16 and 19. Torrential downpours caused the North Saskatchewan River to rise to nearrecord flood stages, and damaged at least 300 homes in the river valley communities of Edmonton. Huge tracts of farmland along the Pembina River were waterlogged. Two deaths were attributed to the floods. The same storm that deluged central Alberta, brought a touch of winter in mid summer to higher elevations in the foothills; nearly 25 cm of snow fell in Banff, Jasper and Yoho National Parks.

The timely rains proved beneficial to Prairie agriculture, ending two years of drought in southern Saskatchewan and southern Alberta. Summer started out wet on the west Coast, several communities in the Interior valleys of British Columbia received twice the normal amount of rainfall in June. On June 15, heavy rains
washed out two bridges and part of the Canadian National Railway tracks at Terrace. After midJuly, the weather turned warm and dry. Daytime temperatures soared well above $30^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ making it an ideal time for thousands of tourists to visit Expo '86. August was very dry on the west Coast, Victoria and Nanaimo had the longest dry spell on record, 45 days - while at Vancouver the same 45 -day stretch was the second longest.

Overall, the summer of ' 86 was a quiet season for forest fires across Canada. However, lightning strikes in the hot and dry weather helped ignite major forest fires in the central Yukon. Over 100 fires destroyed more than 41,000 hectares of timber in the Territory.

As a result of cooler than normal temperatures, ice conditions were more severe than usual in the High Arctic. For the first time since 1947, heavy ice floes blocked shipping lanes in the Norwegian Bay and prevented annual resupply to Eureka by sea.


Tine series of mater budget components at Toronto froo October 1985. Values are based on a 7-day mean. WiC is the water holding capacity of soil

Highlights ... continued fron 1 B

3 times the normal rainfall at most stations. The data from the city of Toronto are worth noting because it is located in the centre of affected region and it has the longest climatic record of any station in Canada. The accompanying graph shows that it was the wettest September $(218$
min) in 143 years. Based on twoweek running averages, the wet spell at Toronto was into its 8th consecutive week at the end of the month!

Harvesting was brought to a standstill with crop damage losses estimated as high as $\$ 100$ million. More than $\$ 1$ million is being spent in Metro Toronto to
repair damages and strengthen waterways. Rain delays have been costly to Toronto's construction boom. Continued wet weather or strong wind storms could result in disastrous flooding along the shores of the Great Lakes which are at their highest levels in 110 years.



