

## Parley Ends, Wondering If Trees Can Start Rain

The International Conference on Tree Growth ended here yesterday with talk about two controversial issues.

Is there a record of the past history of the temperature of the earth in the cells of trees?

### Can trees start rain?

Temperature may control the thickness of cell walls, said Terah L. Smiley, director of the University of Arizona tree-ring laboratory and general chairman of the conference.

This is still debatable. But there is a key, which may unlock the door to the past through these cells—the electron microscope. This instrument of modern applied science can magnify by many thousands of times.

The men at the conference visited the university's electron microscope laboratory, which is directed by the world-known authority, Dr. Ralph W. G. Wyckoff.

With this closer view of the thickness of the secondary wall of the tree cells, a chart of past temperatures may come to light, Smiley said.

It is a question of deposits on the cell walls being controlled by the variations of temperatures.

Dr. Flora M. Scott of the University of California at Los Angeles has worked on the problem and was here for the conference.

The successful effort to find a record of the past in terms of moisture through the width of annual growth rings was pioneered at the University of Arizona.

"We hope to begin work here soon on the cell wall temperature problem," Smiley said.

Dr. Fritz Went, director of the

Missouri Botanical Garden, suggested here yesterday that some of the volatile material given off by trees might be the source of nuclei to start rain in clouds.

A sort of blue haze that hovers over forests could be created by the trees, he said. The material in this haze could be swept up into clouds, starting rain.

Whether rains are particularly attracted to forests has been a controversial question.

Dr. James E. McDonald of the UA Institute of Atmospheric Physics was skeptical about Went's theory and thought it needed considerably more study.

The conference, in session at the university all week, brought many of the world's authorities on the growth of trees to Tucson.

The main concern here was with basic knowledge as to how the growth of trees is controlled by nature—climate, moisture and the variations of temperature.

But there hovered over the conference a concern about the possibilities of increasing the yield of harvests through control of these forces by man.

And ideas were suggested of creating new hybrids with more vigor, putting artificial light on young seedlings and giving trees various tonics to make them grow faster.