

THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

Bulletin No. 1

INSTRUMENTATION SECTION

At the Society's General Assembly in Winnipeg in May 1966, I had the honour of being appointed National Co-ordinator of the Instrumentation Section.

To the best of my knowledge, this is a new category; therefore, records or information as to type or numbers of instruments in use by members of the R.A.S.C. are not available.

I would like to suggest that each Centre appoint a member to keep me informed of the type and number of instruments currently in use by their Centre. For a telescope, this should include the diameter of the objective or mirror and focal length; any unusual features of a particular instrument should be given.

Information should also be included on micrometers, spectroscopes, photometers, camera equipment, etc., sun-observing equipment such as spectroheliograph, spectrohelioscope, monochromator, etc., as well as instruments under construction.

Very old instruments still in use are interesting, particularly if a short history is included.

I hope to receive replies from all of our Centres.

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INSTRUMENTATION SECTION

The response from Bulletin No.1 has been disappointing; possibly it takes a while to get rolling. Information can only be passed on through the Bulletin if it is first received. As suggested earlier, if each Centre would appoint a member to keep me informed, I will see that the material submitted is printed. Not all the information from each Centre will be used in any one Bulletin; excerpts will be selected so that as many Centres as possible can be represented. The rest of the material will be filed and used later.

Mr. Henri Simard, supervisor of the optics and instrument section of the Centre d'Astronomie de Montreal reports that in the latter part of 1966, forty members were constructing telescopes and about the same number will start telescopes in 1967. He also stated that he thought this Bulletin could become very important.

Mr. D.J. FitzGerald reported for the Toronto Centre. He and Mr. Archie Ostrander have each constructed an 8-inch Richest Field telescope. Mr. Ostrander's is an F3.9 and Mr. FitzGerald's is F4.5. These feature tubes that are sealed with plate glass windows. A hole was drilled through the centre of the plate and the diagonal attached directly across it. This removed the conventional spider and spider diffraction. Star images appear more like those in a refractor. Air currents in the tube are practically eliminated and the optical surfaces remain cleaner with the life of the reflective coatings extended.

Mr. FitzGerald explained their method of testing the glass plates. Libby Owens Ford Twin Ground plate was found most suitable. The glass was subjected to an exhaustive bench test by setting it up immediately in front of the main mirror and observing with a Foucault tester and a Ronchi ruling. Although the light had to pass through the glass twice, they could not notice any difference in the appearance of the lines when the plate glass was in or out of the optical path. Apparently one piece of this glass had to be rejected; another make of glass with a better appearing surface finish proved unsuitable when tested.

The University of Victoria is presently having a new 12-inch Tinsley reflector installed in the 16-foot steel dome on the roof of the four storey Science Building. Through the generosity of the University the Victoria Centre had their 4-inch refractor mounted in this dome for the past two years. A roll-off roof enclosure on the same building will now be used for this.

Would all the Centres intending to participate in the display at the 1967 General Assembly in Montreal please advise their Presidents as soon as possible. Pictures from all Centres would be welcomed for the exhibit on astrophotography, equipment, amateur observatories at any stage, star parties and group observing. Complete information should be included so that your Centre or an individual may receive full credit.

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