

## Report on the Cajigal Observatory

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THE building of the new observatory has been started on a site in Caracas at a latitude of approximately  $10^{\circ}30'$  north. Several instruments have already been purchased from the Askania and Zeiss works in Germany. Included in the purchase are two meridian circles, a Schmidt telescope, a double astrograph, a photographic zenith tube, a 26-in. Zeiss refractor of 10.5-m focal length, a 40-in. Cassegrain-Coudé reflector, and quartz crystal clocks. There is also seismological equipment already in operation, and geomagnetic equipment has been included in the over-all operation. The instruments are still crated but it is hoped that they can be put into operation within the next  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 years. A big problem is that there are no astronomers at the present time, but it has been planned

to send personnel abroad to study either in the United States or in Europe.

### DISCUSSION

OORT remarked that the principal thing to be done would be to start a school of astronomy in Venezuela to educate students in astronomy and make them enthusiastic for astronomical work. He felt this was a difficult and rather slow and long process, but it would be important to have an observatory doing fundamental work so close to the equator as this observatory would be. Even if the climate is not ideal it should still be sufficiently good to allow a large number of observations to be made in the course of an entire year.

## Report on the Cordoba Observatory Program

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The role of the Cordoba Observatory in the field of astrometry is briefly discussed.

THE future of astrometric work at Cordoba does not look very promising at the present time. Like other Latin countries, the main difficulty is the lack of trained personnel. The Cordoba Observatory has a long tradition in astrometric work, but after the death of J. Bobone it has not been possible to replace him, and the other five astronomers are all astrophysicists.

There are two schools of astronomy in Argentina, in Cordoba and La Plata, but it is difficult to find students who wish to work in astrometry. Nearly all of them want to work in astrophysics, so the continuance of the work in astrometry is a very serious problem. As far as technical personnel such as observers and computers are concerned, there is no problem, but there is a real need for a scientist to do the planning and the programming of the work.

There are two instruments in Cordoba for astrometric work, a meridian circle by Repsold, and an astrograph of the *Carte du Ciel* type. The meridian circle has been kept in very good condition, but it is located in the middle of the town, where it is not suitable for fundamental work. It is expected that an agreement will be reached with the University of San Juan according to which the instrument will be moved near to San Juan, where observing conditions are much better than in

Cordoba, and where Dr. Nissen and the staff are willing to carry out meridian circle work. This appears to be a very good solution.

The astrograph was used mainly for observations of comets during the past years, but plans have been made to start the reobservation of the Cordoba Astrographic Zone next year. It is also planned to start the observations of the extragalactic nebulae according to the program by Dr. Deutsch of Pulkovo. A program which has just been completed is the photographic program by Dr. Plaut on variable stars in the southern hemisphere. The meridian observations for the catalogue of the south polar cap were completed four years ago, and the reductions are expected to be completed by the end of the year, and the catalogue published by July, 1960. It should also be mentioned that a new edition of the Cordoba Durchmusterung will be made using a photo print.

In cooperation with the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, observations of artificial satellites are being made at a station 100 km from Cordoba. The station has a Baker-Nunn camera and is operated by an astronomer from Cordoba and personnel from the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory.

While this is not important as far as astrometry