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RING OUT, WILD BELLS

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky	Ring out the old, ring in the new
The flying cloud, the frosty light:	Ring, happy bells, across the snow;
The year is dying in the night;	The year is going, let him go;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.	Ring out the false, ring in the true

Ring out old shapes of foul disease,
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

May 1960 find Tennyson's vision brought nearer to realization! There was a time when the astronomer's realm of investigation lay remote from the petty rivalries of earthly powers. Today the control of outer space has become a political issue. Will the very immensity of the universe bring home to man the very humble place he occupies in the scheme of things? It is all very well to say that a plane flying at 1000 miles per hour -- if it could fly through space -- would reach the moon in 10 days, but at the same speed it would take 10 years to reach the sun, and over 400 years to travel to the presently known bounds of the solar system. If you feel inclined, you can figure out for yourselves how long it would take to reach Alpha Centauri, the nearest fixed star. Even at missile speed, 25,000 miles an hour, the prospect of human travel beyond the nearest planets appears remote indeed. When the first living creature has travelled safely to the moon and back we may be ready to make a slight revision in our prediction -- but not by much. Meantime, the very isolation of human beings in space should underline the importance of cooperation rather than competition in the extension of human knowledge and achievement.

Planetarium A recent chat with Garry Marliss revealed that he and Franklin Loehde had been accorded a two-hour interview with the City Architect just before Christmas. The instrument, now in town for a month or more, has been checked and re-packed by Professors Keeping and Gads, who (we were informed later) felt very well satisfied with the quality of the apparatus as well as the apparent scope of its performance. In a subsequent visit to the planetarium site, Garry and Frank took movies of progress made. The outer walls are still being worked on, under canvass. The inner wall of the planetarium proper is complete, and a light lock between this and the outer area prevents outside light from interfering with demonstrations. It is now expected that the planetarium will be completed sometime between mid-April and mid-May. That will be the day of the astronomical tenderfoot, when, from the comfort of his armchair, he may be able to see the diurnal motion of the heavens, planets, moon, and even sputniks included, in all their glory.

"Time, Gentlemen!" The President reminds us of a condition of which we are becoming increasingly well aware, the difficulties under which the Social Committee are working in having to serve refreshments in the same room (Room 111, Arts Building) in which our meetings are held. When the meeting ends rather late -- as it has much too often recently -- we are compelled to remain in the building long after the closing time the janitors prefer, with the result that the most convenient exit doors are closed to us. The President asks, "What is the solution?" and suggests that it be given some attention at the January meeting. Off the cuff, we're inclined to make two suggestions: (1) Start the meetings on time by giving the Agenda to the President before the meeting; (2) Cut down the length of the business section by limiting reports to essentials and dealing with "new business" with dispatch. There is too great a tendency for our meetings to become ragged, and the guest speaker's opportunity for developing his subject and dealing with questions becomes limited, not to mention the fact that yours truly (who taxes the Social Committee to and from meetings) has to wait to the bitter end only to find then that the back door has been locked and a long below-Zero detour to the car is necessary. What a day for the Secretary when he can truthfully record, "The meeting began at precisely 8:15 Mountain Standard Time".

Out of the Editor's Stocking As the result of a broad hint to the right person on the occasion of a recent visit to Hurtig's bookstore, the Editor discovered under the Christmas tree a large package bearing his name and containing a copy of the excellent Larousse Encyclopedia of Astronomy. We hope that some time a similar copy may find its way into our library. It is a very comprehensive book, 12" x 8½", of 500 pages and over 800 illustrations, up to date enough to include material revealed by missile exploration of space, progressive in treatment yet requiring very little higher mathematics on the reader's part. A translation from the French of Rudaux and Vaucouleurs. Incidentally, we hope that if you discover any work of particular interest, you will make it known to our Librarian.

Fan Mail No, we don't get much, we admit, but a recent suggestion from a newspaper editor who found STARDUST interesting added, very justly we felt, that there was not a lot in it that could be passed on to those who were just beginning to get interested in astronomy. That was why, in our December issue, we included a few notes on current phenomena. Here are a few things to watch for during the month following publication of this issue:

Venus is still a conspicuous object in the south-east for two or three hours before sunrise. Jupiter also may be seen, rather low in the south-east at the beginning of the month, but gradually drawing closer to Venus and passing it on the 22nd. By Feb. 7th, Saturn also will be found close to Venus in the morning sky. For those who missed the occultation of Aldebaran last month, there will be a new opportunity to see one on January 10th. The star will disappear behind the moon's dark limb at 2:12 in the morning, and emerge at the bright edge at 3:12 (M.S.T.) It is possible that this may be more easily seen with the naked eye than last month's, the moon not being quite as full. Look for the star near the dark edge of the moon at about 1:45 or 2 o'clock, and watch it until it suddenly disappears.

Our January Speaker The Centre is glad to welcome Dr. Lynne Trainor, of the Department of Physics, as its guest speaker this month. Dr. Trainor will address the Society on "Anti-Matter", and we hope to have a good turn-out of our members to learn more about recent discoveries of the nature of matter and energy. The time, Thursday, January 14, at (we hope) 8:15 P.M.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I was recently looking for an interpretation of the word "SOCIETY" as applied to the R.A.S.C. and as defined in the Oxford Dictionary - and I find it to be "an association of persons united by a common aim or interest or principle." For instance the Royal Society was founded in 1662 for improving natural knowledge. I am confident that the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada is maintaining and fulfilling certain aims, principles and interests as a society sets forth to do. However we must always be progressive in order that our Society may survive.

With changing times I feel we will find it necessary to go beyond the scope of a society. A certain element of competition has entered the picture. There are other places to go; other things to see and do; and other material to read or to listen to. I should not suggest that we assume the aspects of a club - but I am of the opinion that many members and prospective members are looking toward the Royal Astronomical Society to fill a gap in their lives, - a search for new friends as well as new and common interests.

I maintain that every member of the Edmonton Centre has a personal obligation to approach others in our midst - to especially seek out those who are visitors, our newer members, or those who are perhaps not too aggressive in making themselves known among us, - to make them feel they are among friends, and that they are most welcome. It should be known to them that a knowledge of Astronomy is not so essential as an interest in it or related sciences. I am somewhat disturbed myself because of the number of fellow members I cannot greet by name.

I hope this matter may find at least a brief space on the current agenda. I even hope that the meeting may grant me the opportunity to appoint a convenor for a "Welcoming Committee".

I am of the opinion that some of the difficulty lies in the nature of our meeting place - Greater freedom of movement at refreshment time would improve the situation considerably. On the other hand the University of Alberta has been very kind to us, and it certainly would not be in order to complain. I am confident that time and circumstances will work in our favour in this respect.