



Special issue.

June, 1961.

EDMONTON TO HOST GENERAL ASSEMBLY, R.A.S.C.

A long distance phone call to Dr. Peter M. Millman in Toronto Friday evening, resulted in the best news we have heard in some time. The Edmonton Centre has been successful in its bid to host the 1962 General Assembly of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. The decision was made by the National Council of the R.A.S.C. at a meeting in the Society's headquarters in Toronto, on Friday, June 2nd. The Edmonton meeting will be held over the long week-end, May 19th, 20th, and 21st, 1962.

The Edmonton Centre first bid for this meeting last March, when three members, Franklin Loehde, president, Ian McLennan, and Earl Milton, attending this year's meeting in Toronto. Since that time, there has been considerable correspondence between the Edmonton Centre and the National Council informing the Head Office of accommodations in Edmonton, and many other facets to be considered in hosting a meeting of this importance.

Members of the Edmonton Centre will welcome the news of our hosting the R.A.S.C. General Assembly with much pleasure. The National Council has, in fact, given our Centre a vote of confidence in its favourable decision regarding our proposal. The National Meeting in Edmonton will set a precedent, as it will mark the first time such a meeting has been held in Western Canada.

In winning this decision, our job has only started. Much work will have to be done in the next eleven months in order to make this meeting a complete success. With the co-operation of every member in the Edmonton Centre, and with equal co-operation from other Centres in Western Canada who will be working with us in staging this meeting, we should be able to live up to the confidence placed in our Centre by the decision in Toronto last Friday.

DR. R.M. PETRIE VISITS EDMONTON.

Members of the Edmonton Centre, R.A.S.C. were honored recently with a visit by one of the world's truly distinguished astronomers, Dr. R.M. Petrie, Director of the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory in Victoria, B.C. Dr. Petrie, also known as Canada's Dominion Astrophysicist, was accompanied on his trip by his charming wife, the former Dr. Jean McDonald, of Edmonton.

It was indeed rewarding to see a fine turnout for Dr. Petrie's talk, given at a special meeting of the Edmonton Centre, called in his honor. During his talk, Dr. Petrie outlined some of the work carried on at the present time at the D.A.O. and other Canadian Observatories. It should be a source of pride for all of us to realize that Canadian scientists are recognized throughout the world for their contributions to man's understanding of the Universe.

As Dr. Petrie pointed out, there is considerable work yet left to be done in astronomy, especially regarding the determination of distances in the Universe. An error of 20%, not uncommon in determining such vast distances, might result in a possible error of hundreds of billions of miles when projected in the estimation of distances to the faraway stars, and even farther galaxies.

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STARDUST

Special issue.

Dr. Petrie visits Edmonton; cont.

Many of us may have swelled somewhat with pride when Dr. Petrie spoke of the Edmonton Planetarium. He said the building "stood as a tribute to the wisdom and foresight of all those who made possible the erection of this beautiful building." Perhaps, though, there was more pride in our hearts because of the simple fact that Dr. Petrie was able to take time out from his exceedingly busy schedule, to pay the Edmonton Centre a visit. Dr. Petrie and his wife left Edmonton for Montreal, where he was to deliver an address at a meeting of the Royal Society. Next stop: Toronto, to attend the meeting June 2nd of the National Council of the R.A.S.C.

We look forward to having Dr. Petrie and Dr. Petrie back with us again in the not-too-distant future.

Ian McLennan.

NEW EQUIPMENT AT THE PLANETARIUM

Recent patrons at the planetarium have probably noticed a considerable changed production-wise in shows presented in the "Sky Theatre." This is due mainly to the fact that a series of 12 new 35mm projectors have been placed around the entire perimeter of the dome, with each projector capable of casting an image in any desired are of the dome.

This means that while a lecturer is talking about the moon in the southeastern quadrant of the sky, he is able, by a simple process to bring up a much larger image of the moon in that same area. This system received its official preview on Saturday, May 27th, at the special meeting called in honor of the visit of Dr. R.M. Petrie. The new projection system, undoubtedly, was one factor in presenting an impressive picture of the planetarium to our distinguished visitor.

In the next few weeks, as we become more familiar with the operation of this new projection system, we hope to begin our program of training planetarium lecturers. I have tentatively scheduled a special course to begin Friday evening, June 23rd, following the public show that evening. Anyone interested in taking in this special course should contact Ian McLennan or George Williams at the planetarium, Ph. 615-0119. If this date is inconvenient to you, a special appointment can be arranged, or if a number of people find this date inconvenient, alternate arrangements can be made.

It is my sincere hope that in the not-too-distant future, more members of the Edmonton Centre will be able to share in the rewarding (and sometimes trying) experience of planetarium lecturing.

Ian McLennan.

UNIVERSE. Never has this word had so much meaning as it has at the beginning of a now-famous production of Canada's National Film Board. Several days ago, three members of the Edmonton Centre, Earl Milton, Ian McLennan, and George Williams, were granted the very great privilege of a special preview showing of the film "Universe." In this film, the story of the heavens is told in simple, near-poetic language. The "stars" are Canada's 74 inch telescope at the David Dunlap Observatory in Ontario, Professor Donald MacRae of the Observatory staff, and, of course, the stars themselves. A picture of human shadows sweeping across the pavement of a busy street seems to portray dramatically the power of our star, the sun. Through the magic of superb animation, the film carries its audience on a realistic and awe-inspiring tour of the Universe. This production has been recognized around the world, and has won major awards at Cannes, France, the Vancouver Film Festival, and was nominated for an Academy Award in Hollywood. Following the Canadian premiere of "Universe," at celebrations marking the David Dunlap Observatory's 25th anniversary, Professor MacRae was given an "oscar" as the "most astronomical actor of the year," presented by Dr. John F. Heard, Director of the Observatory. The oscar? A spaceman holding a J. Arthur Rank hammer, of course!

STARDUST

EDMONTON'S FIRST STAR NIGHT SCORES A SUCCESS! The evenings of Friday and Saturday, May 19th and 20th, saw hundreds of people flock to the planetarium, as a welcome culmination of many weeks of hard work and sacrifice of time by members of the Edmonton Centre, in preparation for "Star Night."

Not the least of our worries, was, of course, the weather, which changed for the better according to Frank Loehde's prediction, providing two beautiful evenings for viewing the moon — a day or so shy of first quarter. With warm, clear evenings, and ample publicity regarding our first attempt at staging a public star party, good crowds, about equal in size, patronized the grounds each evening.

One popular feature was, of course, the planetarium show, which was presented in an abbreviated fashion in order to accommodate the number of people attending. The show presented a glimpse into future space research, and also featured a trip to the moon, where we attempted to prepare everyone for actual viewing of the moon through the many telescopes set up outside the planetarium. The telescopes, naturally, were most popular. Literally hundreds of people attending had never seen through a telescope in their lives before, and were thrilled at the sight of the moon. We are indebted not only to our own members, but to the Calgary Centre of the R.A.S.C. who provided us with two of their fine instruments for use during Star Night.

Films shown in open air by Alex Stockwell were also extremely popular. Displays set up outside the planetarium, including a "TV" Slide-viewer were very well received. There were too many people contributing to the success of this venture to name them all here. It is more appropriate that we think of Star Night as an R.A.S.C. venture, the success of which should give us all a sense of pride.

Perhaps one of the truly great highlights of Star Night was a special model of the Solar System designed by our esteemed president, F.C.J.T. Loehde, T.Q. In embarking on this project, Franklin deserves the highest of praise, for his was a creative role, and would have done much towards the success of Star Night had he finished it in time.

Not to be discouraged, however, Franklin turned his talents to other fields which made both evenings highly successful. He refused to lecture during the planetarium shows, thus enabling him to count the money as it poured in.

Ignoring the fact that Franklin is not bonded, the R.A.S.C. grossed \$394.00 on both evenings. Expenses ran close to \$200.00, including our agreement with the City regarding planetarium trons, and so we netted somewhere close to \$200.00.

Incidentally, it is not too soon to be thinking about our next Star Night. August 25th would be a perfect evening, as there is an eclipse of the moon that night. It is a Friday, and the evenings are longer, in May. With a great deal of effort between now and then, we could really put the Edmonton Centre on the map.



Franklin designs a Solar System.... Geo Williams.