

411 Brixton Avenue  
St. Lambert, P.Q.  
April 22, 1963

Miss Ruth J. Northcott, Editor  
Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada  
David Dunlap Observatory  
Richmond Hill, Ontario

Dear Miss Northcott,

Thank-you for your letter of April 16, and for your assistance in improving my report. Enclosed is the revised copy of my report along with your suggested redraft. As you will note, I followed the redraft closely, but made a few small changes.

Enclosed is a drawing of Comet Seki-Lines and a graph showing the brightness of Nova Hercules 1963. Would you please return the comet drawing.

I hope that you will find this redraft more suitable for publication, and that the quality of the drawing and graph is good enough for reproduction.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Low

## COMET AND NOVA SECTION

by Jim Low  
National Coordinator, Standing Committee on Observational Activities

In 1961, the National Council of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada formed the Standing Committee on Observational Activities to encourage closer contact and exchange of information between observing members in the different Centres. A total of eleven observing disciplines were approved, one of these covering Comets and Novae. In November of that year, the first bulletin of the Comet and Nova Section was issued and has been followed by three additional bulletins and seven announcements. The bulletins inform members of the current activities of this section, and the announcements are issued whenever a bright comet or nova appears. Each Centre receives copies of the bulletins and announcements as they are issued, and it is hoped that they are made know to members who may be interested.

The purpose of this section is: (i) to encourage the systematic search for comets and novae, and (ii) to observe and report these objects when they do appear.

Observers in this discipline usually select several areas when making searches of the sky, each ten degrees square and located in different regions of the sky. These are searched with binoculars for objects of brightness down to sixth or seventh magnitude. If something unusual is observed, the National Coordinator of the Comet and Nova Section is notified at once. If nothing unusual is seen (which is more frequently the case), a negative report form is filled

out and mailed to him at the end of the month in which the search was made. Negative reports are important, for if an unusual object is reported later, these may be used to pin-point the time when the object was and was not visible.

During 1962, a total of 1953 searches of 67 areas were made by 27 observers. Members of only three of our sixteen Centres, Hamilton, Montreal, and Niagara Falls, participated in the search part of this programme. As there are approximately 400 areas of the sky, each ten degrees square, well placed for Canadian observers throughout the year, many more observers are still needed.

Comet Seki-Lines and Humason were observed many times during 1962, and several fainter comets were also reported. The Reports are still coming in and the total number of comet observations in Canada reported in 1962 may well exceed two hundred. At the time of writing (April 21), it is predicted that 1963 will be a still better year than 1962. Reports have already been received on Comet Ikeya (1963a), Nova Herculis 1963, and Comet Alcock (1963b).

This programme requires many more participating members, and those who have an interest are asked to contact the National Coordinator directly. If more than one person in a Centre is interested, a Comet and Nova Coordinator for that Centre should be appointed who will correspond with the National Coordinator. In addition, unattached members of the society are invited to take part in this programme.

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