

## Astronomical Society of South Africa (Cape Centre)

## Twenty-seventh Session

Minutes of Fifth Ordinary Meeting held at the Royal Observatory at 8.15 P.M. on Wednesday the 19<sup>th</sup> March 1941.

Dr. Jackson presided. The attendance was good.

The Minutes of Ordinary Meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 1940, were read and confirmed.

The names of the following gentlemen, having been considered by the Committee and passed for election, were read to the meeting, and unanimously declared elected as members: Mr. W. Bacon, P.O. Box 440, Benoni, bro. Mr. Meyjes, sec. Mr. Turner.

L<sup>ieut</sup>. Col. S. S. Halse, Air Station, Kimberley, bro. Mr. Grayde, sec. Dr. Stoy.

Dr. H. Grant Whyte, 916 Colonial Mutual Bldg, West Street, Durban, bro. Mrs. Borlase, sec. Mr. Turner.

The evening was devoted to a discussion of the observations made by members of the comets de Kock and Cunningham.

Dr. Jackson said that comets were usually discovered close to the sun, in the early evening sky in the West, or in the East in the early morning. It was unusual for a comet to be discovered near the full moon, as de Kock's was.

Mr. de Kock said that he discovered the comet while observing variable stars. The comet had a tail about a degree in length at the time of discovery. Mr. Houghton informed members that his discovery of a comet was made in the same way.

A number of slides of the comet, made from photographs taken at the Observatory, were shown on the screen by Dr. Stoy, with Mr. Landers working the lantern. A number of slides of past comets were also shown.

Mr. Simentoff had seen the Comet de Kock at

Torrens River, from a railway train.

Mr. Grayde gave an account of his observations of the comet as seen from Kimberley. He <sup>measured</sup> estimated the length of the tail and found it to be  $2\frac{1}{2}$  long.

Mr. Hirst had measured the tail, and made the result  $2\frac{1}{4}$ , on the 28<sup>th</sup> January. The Position Angle of the tail was  $232^\circ$  on that day, and the tail was  $5^\circ$  off the straight line joining the head and Comet.

Capt. Cameron-Moran agreed with Dr. Jackson that binoculars were the best optical aid for the observation of comets.

Mr. Krumm had observed the kidney-shaped head of the comet, although his observing was often interrupted by cloud.

A letter received by the Hon. Secretary from Capt. F. A. Peckham giving an account of observations of the comet taken at sea, was read to the meeting.

Mr. G. O. Nesper asked whether the period of de Koch's comet was known. Dr. Jackson replied that the object had not been observed over a long enough period to determine whether its path was an hyperbola, parabola, or ~~an~~ ellipse.

Mr. Schonegevel said that the first comet <sup>he recalled</sup> to be discovered by a South African was Findlay's comet. Skjellemp's comet led to the formation of the Cape Astronomical Association. Other members of the Astronomical Society to discover comets were messrs Taylor, Reid, Forbes, and Houghton.

Capt. Cameron-Moran said that members of the Society were grateful for the monthly notes. Mr. Schonegevel concurred. <sup>congratulations</sup>

Dr. Stoy moved a vote of thanks to Mr. de Koch for his discovery of the comet. The members showed their appreciation in the usual manner.

This concluded the business for the evening.