

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UNION OBSERVATORY

1921/1922

Director Dr. R.T.A. Innes
(Union Astronomer)

There has been no change in the staff, and work has been continued on the usual lines.

During the two years 1921-1922 Circulars 51 to 55 were issued, and with these were included 71 maps of the Southern sky on the scale of 1" = 36mm. So far 137 of these maps have been printed and distributed, leaving 419 still to be done to cover the whole sky south of -19° . Circular No. 56, dealing with a possible short period irregularity in the motion of the Moon and the choice of certain small objects on the Moon, in addition to Mösting A, for the determination of the Moon's position, is in the press and almost ready for issue.

Orbits were computed for the Southern comets 1922 a (Reid) and 1922 d (Skjellerup).

Various minor planets were observed at the request of Northern observatories.

The Blink-microscope has been mainly employed on plates for proper motions. The examination of the Cape Zone was duly finished and the results are now being prepared for press. As explained in Circular 53, about one-third of the Melbourne Zone -66° was lost in transit (probably stolen), so the work in this zone was finished and has been duly published.

In 1921, and in connection with the desire of the Imperial Government to divest itself of financial obligations incurred in the Union of South Africa, a proposal to amalgamate the Cape and Union Observatories was mooted. The Union Astronomer's report was asked for, but it did not for obvious reasons favour the proposal. There are, as it is, too few active observatories in the Southern Hemisphere. The proposal was strongly opposed by English astronomers and ultimately fell through.

A wireless receiving-apparatus (with a seven-valve amplifier) has been in course of erection. So far, with a temporary aerial, time and weather messages from Lourenzo Marques are the only ones received regularly.

Towards the end of 1922 the Union Astronomer went to England to superintend the completion of the mechanical portion of the 26-inch refractor under construction by Sir Howard Grubb & Sons. It is understood that the objective will be completed early in 1924.