

GENERAL SCIENCE

Science Honored Hoover

The late President Herbert Hoover, who promoted scientific advancement throughout his life, received some of the scientific world's highest honors—By Barbara Tufty

► THE 31st PRESIDENT of the United States held honors no other President has held—among which is membership in the eminent scientific society, the National Academy of Sciences.

Herbert Hoover, who died Oct. 20, was also the first American President to have an asteroid named for him. Hooveria, one of the thousands of minor planets orbiting around the sun, was discovered by Professor Johann Palisan of the University of Vienna, Austria, in March 1920, and named for Mr. Hoover while he was engaged in providing food for Europe after World War I, before he was President.

Mr. Hoover started his career as a mining engineer after his graduation in 1895 from Stanford University, Calif.

He was in charge of very large mining enterprises in Australia, China, Burma, the Ural Mountains, Mongolian Siberia and South Africa. One early success in his mining career was to advance the flotation process of mining in Australia and work out a means of profitably recovering the metal zinc from low-grade silver ore.

During this technical stage of his life, Mr. Hoover successfully solved many social problems of workmen and their communities in areas throughout the world. For example, the Kyshtim project in the Ural Mountains maintained a community of 70,000 people who "were lifted by him through his scientific and social work from poverty and squalor to a high state of comfort and prosperity," stated the late Dr. Vernon Kellogg, an original trustee of SCIENCE SERVICE, early chairman of the National Research Council and close friend of Mr. Hoover's.

Mr. Hoover constantly stressed the importance of science and strongly urged the support by the people of "pure or fundamental sciences as a necessary basis for continuing advance in applied science."

"We have prided ourselves on our practicality as a nation," he said in a speech in 1925 before the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. "Would it not be a practical thing to do to give adequate organized financial support to pure science? If, by chance, we develop a little contribution to abstract learning and knowledge, our nation will be immensely greater for it."

In 1902, he was elected a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and a fellow in 1915.

In 1922, he was elected a member of the National Academy of Sciences and in 1925 became chairman of a special board of men of science and public affairs called to establish a National Research Fund of several million dollars for the support of work in fundamental science.

Possibly one of the most honored Presidents in our history, Mr. Hoover received

honorary degrees from 85 institutions in the United States and abroad; 468 medals, awards, honors, including 67 gold medals from American and foreign organizations and societies; and 60 honorary memberships in scientific and technical societies.

Some of the awards for scientific merit include medals from the Mining and Metallurgical Society of America for "distinguished contribution to literature of mining," from the National Academy of Sciences for "eminence in the application of science to the public welfare," from the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers for "achievement in mining," and in 1929 the John Fritz Gold Medal awarded jointly by the American Society of Civil Engineers, the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and the American Institute of Electrical Engineers for notable scientific or industrial achievement.

In 1900 he was the first recipient of the Hoover Medal from the American Institute of Mining Engineers, an honor instituted to commemorate Hoover's civic and humanitarian achievements.

With his wife, Lou Henry, Mr. Hoover translated from original Latin a monumental book, "De Re Metallica," by G. Agricola, written in 1556 on mining and metallurgy. This translation appeared when Mr. Hoover was a resident in London, just before World War I.

• Science News Letter, 86:277 October 31, 1964

ASTRONOMY

Quiet Sun Is 'Acting Up' With Unusual Sunspots

► THE SUN, which is in the quiet phase of its 11-year activity cycle, is bursting forth with unusual sunspot and solar flare liveliness, a representative of International Quiet Sun Year's (IQSY) program reported.

The present quiet period was preceded by the most turbulent noisy phase recorded since systematic observation of the sun's activity was started 200 years ago. Dr. Martin A. Pomerantz, chairman of the U.S. Committee for IQSY, reported this in Physics Today, Oct. 1964.

• Science News Letter, 86:277 October 31, 1964

TECHNOLOGY

Giant Space Loom Weaves Stainless Steel

► A GIANT LOOM that can weave stainless steel, as well as normal yarn, is turning out goods for space.

The loom produces structures made of a material called Airmat, two airtight layers of cloth, connected by a network of "drop threads" woven between them. Airmat is being made and studied by Goodyear Aerospace Corporation, Akron, Ohio, as a means of converting boosters and free-falling re-entry capsules into maneuverable glide vehicles.

The loom, ordered as part of a United States Air Force contract, is one of the largest machines in the aerospace industry. Its product, Airmat, however, is not confined to possible use in space. It has been used for projects as earthbound as gymnasiums for the U.S. Navy's Polaris submarines.

• Science News Letter, 86:277 October 31, 1964



Goodyear

LOOM TO WEAVE STEEL—Stainless steel strands that are used to make Airmat material are shown being fed into the giant loom. An engineer inspects a sample of the finished product with the metallic threads stretched between the outer surfaces.