

"We, who have known him as a colleague, as director of our institution, and as a neighbor in a small and intimate community, had from the first a complete confidence in his loyalty to the United States, his discretion in guarding its secrets and his deep concern for its safety, strength and welfare. Our confidence in his loyalty and patriotic devotion remains unimpaired as our admiration for his magnificent public service is undiminished."

They noted that Oppenheimer was also serving his country in a "less conspicuous" manner that is of "great significance" by directing with "inspired devotion" the work of the Institute.

Those signing included Harold F. Cherniss, Ernest H. Kantorowicz, Benjamin D. Meritt, Erwin Panofsky, Homer A. Thompson, E. L. Woodward, Deane Montgomery, Marston Morse, Abraham Pais, Atle Selberg, John von Neumann, Hassler Whitney, Hetty Goldman, E. A. Lowe, Walter W. Stewart, Kurt Weitzmann, James W. Alexander, Julian H. Bigelow, Freeman J. Dyson, Kurt Godel, Herman H. Goldstine, George Palczek, Oswald Veblen, Hermann Weyl, and Chen Ning Yang.

Oppenheimer Issues Short Statement

Oppenheimer issued the following statement after receiving a copy of the AEC decision:

"I have seen the release of the AEC. Dr. Smyth's fair and considered statement, made with full knowledge of the facts, says what needs to be said.

"Without commenting on the security system which has brought all this about, I do have a further word to say. Our country is fortunate in its scientists, in their high skill, and their devotion.

"I know that they will work faithfully to preserve and strengthen this country. I hope that the fruit of their work will be used with humanity, with wisdom and with courage.

"I know that their counsel when sought will be given honestly and freely. I hope that it will be heard."

Science News Letter, July 10, 1954

ASTRONOMY

Total Eclipse Seen by Millions

See Front Cover

➤ JUST AN instant before the moon blacked out the sun during the total eclipse on June 30, hundreds of thousands of people on both sides of the Atlantic saw with their own eyes the most beautiful diamond ring in the world, pictured on the cover of this week's SCIENCE NEWS LETTER.

Millions of others viewed the celestial show on television and movie screens. Many astronomical observations, however, were frustrated by bad weather along a good part of the totality path.

Science News Letter, July 10, 1954



CURB-HOPPING WHEELCHAIR—With this new wheelchair, the invalid can get up and down curbs without requiring aid.

INVENTION

Wheelchair Climbs Curbs

➤ A CURB-CLIMBING wheelchair has been invented to free invalids from the embarrassment and inconvenience of having someone with them when they take a roll through the park.

Requiring no more force to mount a curb than it does to travel on level ground, the wheelchair would cost only 30% more than ordinary wheelchairs on a production basis.

This was the finding of engineers in the research division of New York University's College of Engineering who developed the chair for the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis.

The model demonstrated was the "off-spring" of three false starts. The first chair borrowed a pole-vaulting technique. When wheeled to the curb at seven feet a second, two rods sprang out at the right time to leapfrog the chair from road to curb. This model was rejected because it was easily tipped over, it put its user at a psychological disadvantage and it made a lot of noise.

The second prototype used a complicated mechanism involving piston rods. It cost too much, it was too complex and it "looked like a miniature locomotive," criticized Leon Bennett, who was one of the research engineers.

Then he and co-designers Renato Contini, William Murray and Herbert Trampusch worked up the third version that depended

upon expensive hydraulic jacks which signed this model's death warrant.

However, with the last model came the germ of an idea that grew into the present wheelchair. It uses a "block-and-tackle" principle that gets the patient up on a curb in less than a minute.

All the invalid has to do is touch the curb with his front wheels, press the operating handles on each armrest and turn them three times. Two steel rods jack up the front of the wheelchair. Then he moves forward slightly and twists the handles in the other direction to jack up the rear wheels.

Science News Letter, July 10, 1954

ASTRONOMY

Very Faint Comet Spotted in Corona

➤ A VERY faint comet has been discovered in the constellation of Corona, the crown, now directly overhead, by Robert G. Harrington of Mt. Wilson and Palomar Observatories in California, Harvard College Observatory has reported. The comet was spotted on June 24 and is of magnitude 19, much too faint to be seen except with the very largest telescopes.

Science News Letter, July 10, 1954