

Safe Mooring for Dirigible

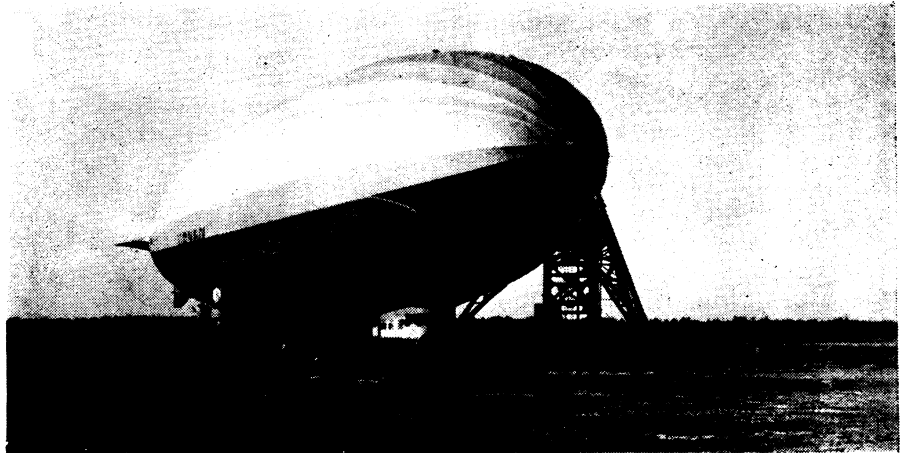
Aeronautics

New Device Now Tethers the Los Angeles

THE Los Angeles is now brought to earth and made secure by a few score men instead of a few hundred. A mobile "stub" mooring mast is the heart of the new apparatus developed by the U. S. Navy which has pulled down and housed the huge dirigible in a 20 mile-an-hour cross-wind with much greater speed and safety than the operation used to be performed by hundreds of men.

The new system secures the airship at both ends and overcomes the great danger of damage from vertical winds to which the ship is subjected when attached by only one end to a mast even as tall as 200 feet. It provides a circular railroad track surrounding a mast only 60 feet high. The nose of the dirigible is fixed to the mast in the usual way while the tail rests on a special railroad car.

The airship then follows the direction of the wind like a weather vane, swinging about its nose on the circular track. Being fixed at both ends and yet able to respond to wind



changes, the craft can be brought very close to the ground without danger and made easily accessible for repairs.

To put the airship into the hangar its stern is detached from the railroad car and placed on a pneumatic wheel device capable of casting in any direction like a chair roller. The

stub mast at the other end is then drawn by a tractor toward the hangar. As the docking rails which extend from the hangar are reached the stern is fixed to them by cables so that the ship will not be battered about by the wind.

Science News-Letter, June 14, 1930

New Comet

A NEW comet has been discovered in the southern heavens by a veteran amateur comet discoverer, David Lamont Forbes of Rondebosch, South Africa, the International Bureau of Astronomic Telegrams at Copenhagen has been informed.

It is of the ninth magnitude, too faint to be seen by the unaided eye, and is not far in heavenly location from the bright star Fomalhaut in the constellation of Piscis Australis, now visible only from the southern hemisphere.

On Monday, June 2, when the discovery was made, it was located at right ascension 23 hours 33 minutes 56 seconds and declination south 32 degrees 48 minutes 33 seconds. It has no plainly visible tail. It is moving slowly southward in the sky at the rate of 24 seconds a day but its future course in the heavens can be told only after more observations are obtained.

The new comet is not the comet 1930d which has recently been under observation by American observatories.

Astronomy

Science News-Letter, June 14, 1930

Oxford Child Godmother to Pluto

Astronomy

PLUTO, the new planet, known as Planet X before its christening by its discoverers, has a juvenile godmother in the person of an eleven-year-old girl of Oxford, England, Miss Venetia Burney. Shortly after the discovery of the new planet by astronomers at Lowell Observatory, Prof. H. H. Turner, the Oxford astronomer, cabled to Prof. V. M. Slipher, director, Miss Burney's suggestion that the planet be named Pluto and in the official announcement of the naming Prof. Slipher acknowledges the suggestion as the first to be received.

Minerva was another popular suggestion but as it has long been used for one of the asteroids this prevented the new planet from bearing the name of the goddess of wisdom. Prof. Slipher suggests that a fitting symbol to go with the name will be a device made of the two first letters of the name Pluto capitalized, an L partially superimposed on a P. Incidentally, these are the initials of the late Prof. Percival Lowell whose studies inaugurated the search that resulted in the discovery of Pluto.

Other astronomers, notably Prof. E. W. Brown of Yale, in a recent communication to the National Academy of Sciences, have concluded that Prof. Lowell's computations of some twenty years ago did not precisely predict the location of Pluto. Prof. Slipher answers this criticism indirectly when he writes in a Lowell Observatory Circular that Pluto "appears to be a trans-Neptunian, non-cometary, non-asteroidal body that fits substantially Lowell's predicted longitude, inclination and distance for his Planet X. Lowell considered his predicted data as only approximate, and a one to one correspondence between forecast and find would not be expected by those familiar with the problem. As he himself said in his Trans-Neptunian Planet Memoir: 'Analytics thought to promise the precision of a rifle and finds it must rely upon the promiscuity of a shot gun.' This remarkable trans-Neptunian planetary body has been found as a direct result of Lowell's work, planning and convictions and there appears present justification for referring to it as his Planet X."

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