plains. Buffalo grass is highly resistant to drought, will stand all but the most extreme cold, and with its everlasting habit of sending out "runners" like those of a strawberry plant it keeps an uninterrupted year-after-year hold on the soil.

It is as good food for cattle as it once was for the native bison, it can be made into handsome lawns and well-kept golf courses, and in general it offers to be a better vegetable citizen of the West than many of the "fancier" immigrant plants that have been unable to "take it" when the pinch comes. Government and state scientists have carried out experiments with it along a number of lines, and they recommend it highly.

It does, however, need encouragement to re-establish itself where it has been plowed out. It was thought at first that if an abandoned field were just left alone the buffalo grass would reclaim it. But experience has shown that this will not take place fully in less than 20 or 30 years, and in the meantime less desirable grass species and weeds will be in possession.

Fortunately, its growth habits make it fairly easy to propagate. It will grow from seed, it will take hold as solid sheets of transplanted sod, and chopped-up sod bits send out their runners to extend and solidify their little conquests in quite rapid fashion. A recent circular of the U. S. Department of Agriculture gives practical suggestions for those who would aid nature in re-establishing the West's ancient mantle of buffalo grass.

Science News Letter, October 5, 1935

SEISMOLOGY

Quake Shakes Sea Bottom Off British Columbia

AN EARTHQUAKE of moderate severity shook the sea bottom off the coast of British Columbia on Tuesday afternoon, Sept. 24, at 5:12.2 p. m., Eastern Standard Time. The location of the quake's epicenter, in latitude 50 degrees north, longitude 131 degrees west, was worked out by seismologists of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey from data transmitted by wire through Science Service.

Stations reporting were those of the Dominion Observatory, Ottawa; the Dominion Meteorological Observatory, Victoria, B. C.; Pennsylvania State College; Georgetown University, Washington, D. C.; the private observatory of Mrs. M. M. Seeburger, Des Moines, Iowa; the University of California, Berkeley, Calif., and the observatory of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, Chicago, Ill.

Science News Letter, October 5, 1935

ASTRONOMY—AVIATION

200-Inch Telescope Mirror Now Nears Room Temperature

Announcement That Huge Disk Will Not Be Ready Until December Changes Army Plans for Huge Airplane Wing

THE giant 200-inch diameter glass disk, which eventually will be the great mirror for the observatory of the California Institute of Technology on Mt. Palomar, will be removed from the annealing ovens at the Corning Glass Works within the next month.

The temperature of the huge glass disk is now 302 degrees Fahrenheit, still far above the temperature of boiling water at 212 degrees. The carefully controlled cooling will have so progressed, however, that it is expected that the disk can be removed from the annealing ovens between October 15 and November 1.

Approximately two months later the disk will be placed on its specially built flat car for shipment to California. Tentative date for shipment is between December 15 and January 1.

Announcement that the giant 200-inch glass disk from the Corning Glass Works will not be shipped until the middle of December has altered the plans of the U. S. Army Air Corps to use the specially built flat car to transport east a huge airplane wing now under secret construction at the plant of the Douglas Aircraft Co. at Santa Monica, Calif.

The glass disk, destined for future use as the world's largest telescope mirror, is sixteen feet in diameter. The chord of the huge airplane wing—the distance front to back at the widest point—is approximately the same size.

Aviation officers at Rockwell Field, Calif., had been investigating the possibility of using the special flat car to bring the huge wing back to Middletown, Pa., for assembly.

Because of the delay in shipping the glass disk, the huge wing will probably have to be shipped by water via the Panama Canal, since it will be completed long before December 15.

Details of the new plane are guarded by the Army officials in Washington. Whether the new plane will be a large bombing plane to enter the Army's competition for such planes, or whether a new seaplane is planned, are questions which Army officials will not answer at present.

Because of the experience of the Douglas factory in building commercial land transport planes, conjecture would indicate a bomber. The chord dimension of the new plane of 16 feet would bear out this supposition. The new Douglas transports have a chord of 14.1 feet.

The new clipper ships which the Martin Company recently built for the use of Pan-American Airways in their trans-Pacific flights, by contrast, have a chord dimension of 20.5 feet.

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Since the advent of commercial aviation, almost exactly 25 years ago, the major achievements in a popular sense, reports Mr. Warner, have been (1) the Navy's flight across the Atlantic Ocean in 1919; (2) the Army's round-the-world flight in 1924; (3) Lindbergh's solo flight to France and (4) Wiley Post's flight around the world "in barely more than the scriptural six days of labor."

The supreme developments which have made possible the feats of 1935 airplane transports must include, the aviation authority indicates: (1) the development of the supercharger to improve engine performance at high altitudes; (2) the evolution of an airway system of lighting adequate for night flying of passengers; (3) the improvement of the technique of radio navigation; and (4) the engine cowling, or cookiecutter-looking cover which shields aviation engines and makes possible a reduction of effective air resistance by almost one-third.

Science News Letter, October 5, 1935