

ASTRONOMY

**Russian Astronomer
Defended Against Party**

NEWS from Moscow that a leading Soviet astronomer, Prof. Boris Gerasimovitch (Gerasimovic), head of Pulkovo Observatory in Leningrad, had been criticized by Leningrad's Communist party newspaper for "servility" toward foreign science recalls the general American feeling that science is worldwide activity with a minimum of national ties.

In response to an inquiry from Science Service, Dr. Harlow Shapley, director of Harvard College Observatory, said:

"Astronomy has always been distinctly international and publication of scientific results and theories in foreign journals is natural and sometimes the only effective procedure."

Prof. Gerasimovitch in the Leningrad *Pravda's* attack had been taken to task for publishing results of his observatory in foreign journals.

Dr. Shapley said further that Prof. Gerasimovitch should be ranked as one of the leading astronomers of Europe.

Science News Letter, August 1, 1936

ASTRONOMY

**Japanese Astronomer
Discovers New Comet**

TWO comets in the sky, both visible to keen eyes that know where to look, are intriguing astronomers just now. One of these, Kaho's comet, has just been discovered by an amateur Japanese astronomer, Siguro Kaho, whose name it bears. The other is Peltier's comet, discovered in May by Leslie C. Peltier, Ohio amateur. (See SNL, May 30.)

Tokyo, Lick, Yerkes, Harvard observatories and Tashkent Observatory in Turkestan have confirmed the existence of Kaho's comet, which like Peltier's comet, was picked up by an amateur variable star observer. Siguro Kaho, after sighting the new heavenly object with his small telescope at Sappora, Japan, reported its existence to Tokyo Observatory, whence the astronomical world was bulletined the news in coded cable messages through the international astronomical clearing house at Copenhagen. Dr. Harlow Shapley, director of Harvard Observatory, received the news and notified American observatories.

From a photograph made at Harvard's Oak Ridge Observatory by L. E. Cunningham, the position of the comet was computed as right ascension 9 hours,

5 minutes, 20 seconds, and declination north 35 degrees, 59 minutes, 50 seconds with a very small motion.

When discovered, it was of the sixth magnitude, which is just about the limit of possible seeing with the unaided eyes. It is low in the northwestern sky just after sunset, well below the constellation of the Great Bear or Ursa Major in which the Big Dipper is located, and

it is not far from the two brightest stars of the Lynx. The new comet has a definite nucleus and a tail nearly a degree long, pointing away from the sun.

Peltier's comet is moving in the northeastern sky and is increasing in brilliance day by day. It will be at its peak on Aug. 4, when it will be sixteen million miles from earth.

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ENGINEERING

**World Power Conference
To be Held in Washington**

WHAT the present "Power Age" is coming to, and how the nations are putting their coal, oil, and water to work most effectively will be discussed in Washington, when experts from 46 nations gather for the Third World Power Conference, September 7 to 12.

The two previous international gatherings of this type, in London and Berlin, stressed technical problems of engineering. The Washington conference is expected to give more thought to the economic angles such as conservation of resources, and private - versus - public ownership of utilities.

The 700 foreign delegates are said to be greatly interested in the Tennessee Valley Authority as an experiment in coordinated use of water resources through regional planning.

The United States' program of rural electrification will be discussed and compared with progress in France, Sweden, South Africa, and other countries. An electrified farm, completely equipped from electric milking machines and flood lights for the barnyard to electric dishwashers and air-conditioning apparatus for the house, is Exhibit A in this department of the conference. The Virginia farm thus converted into an exhibit of the power age is already arousing public interest as one of the sights of the capital and its neighborhood.

Discussions of the international group, expected to be lively, are to be interpreted by a telephone device. A speech made in French or any other language will be translated simultaneously by a battery of interpreters each speaking into a telephone receiver. The translation will thus be relayed to the hall, where, by means of head phones and switches a delegate can listen in on the language he chooses.

Although 300 scientific papers have already poured into the headquarters of the conference, and several hundred more are expected, the conference will not have to listen to this avalanche of words in a babel of languages. Instead, the popular method of printing the speeches in advance will be adopted, and papers will be briefly summed up from the floor.

A series of technical study tours, planned for the weeks before and after the conference, will carry delegates to inspect such American power achievements as Boulder Dam, the Tennessee Valley projects, Grand Coulee Dam, and the Niagara Falls power development.

The Second Congress on Large Dams will be held in conjunction with the power conference, and will deal with strictly technical questions.

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ECOLOGY

**Small Wild Animals
Resist Drought Successfully**

SMALL wild animals in the drought area are suffering less than livestock, the U. S. Biological Survey informed Science Service. Such lesser native creatures as prairie dogs, rabbits, ground-squirrels, and the owls, hawks and snakes that prey upon them, manage to pick up a living when pasture has failed for the bigger beasts. It is a case of the biological meek inheriting the earth.

Biological Survey scientists discount stories of wholesale migrations of jack-rabbits from South Dakota into Nebraska. Migrations have occurred from time to time, but they are always more or less local affairs, it was explained.

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