

Mercury passes sun

Local astronomers join world colleagues
in recording once-in-every-ten-years event

(Special to The MANILA TIMES)

BAGUIO, May 6.—Local astronomers in the Manila Observatory on Mirador Hill, this city, participated today in timing the transit of Mercury over the sun, along with other observers throughout the world.

Fr. J. Hennessey, S.J., Manila Observatory director, said that the transit of Mercury over the sun is a phenomenon which takes place only once in 10 years.

Father Hennessey stated that this phenomenon is similar to the eclipse of the sun except that Mercury is so far away from the earth

that it is seen only as a black dot or as a sunspot passing over the surface of the sun.

The Manila Observatory here took three photographs of the transit, one at 8:05 a.m., the next at 10:15.5, and the third five minutes later.

Astronomers, said Father Hennessey, are very much interested in the exact time when Mercury enters the solar disk and the exact time when it leaves the disk.

The diameter of Mercury is a little less than one half of that of the earth.

Visible on films are spots

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Mercury passes

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on the sun. A few hundred years ago, astronomers thought that sunspots were transits of unknown planets across the surface of the sun.

Father Miller who took pictures of the transit, said that like the moon in relation to the earth, Mercury may always keep the same face towards the sun.—M.

Phenomenon Of Mercury Passing Over Sun Noted

The passing of the planet Mercury over the sun, a phenomenon which takes place once in every ten yearss, was recently observed by astronomers at Mirador Hill.

According to Fr. J. Hennessey, S.J., director of the Observatory, the transit of Mercury over the sun is rather similar to that of the eclipse of the sun, except that Mercury is so far away from the earth that all that could be seen is a black spot passing over the face of the sun.

Fr. Hennessey explained that the diameter of the planet Mercury is a little less than one half of that of the earth.

Photographs taken of the phenomenon show visible spots on the face of the sun, a sign taken a few hundred years ago by astronomers to mean the transits of unknown planets across the surface of the sun.

Fr. Miller, also of the Observatory, who took the pictures of the
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phenomenal event, said that like the moon in relation to the earth, Mercury keeps the same face towards the sun.