

Hugendobler, his executive assistant, and the pair took us to their study upstairs, a room filled with weather charts, rock and wood samples, shells, slides of the heavens, prisms and other gadgets.

The Jesuit weathermen are not alone to themselves on Mirador. In an extension of their observatory a group of young men from all over the world are going through the final phases of their theological and scientific studies that would make them future Jesuits. Up there, above the noise of the world and of a resort town, the climate is just right for the twin pursuits—of studying the heavens and preparing for priesthood.

The Earth Records Its Movements

We saw the young men—Chinese, Americans, Spaniards—playing basketball on a court overhung with radio antennae to catch signals from the sun, but Fr. Hugendobler reminded us we were less concerned with them than with their weather-tracking apparatus which we came to see. Through a long corridor where a lone Jesuit was pacing back and forth in prayer, the two weathermen took us outside, downhill to a mound beneath which was a huge vault housing sensitive instruments that react quickly to the least vibration coming through the deep core of the earth. The instruments rest tightly against the hard foundation of Mirador Hill and with thin beams of light and fine pens trace quivering lines on record paper the duration and intensity of ordinary and extraordinary movements of the earth. A young assistant sat in front of a tall instrument—a time and power console—keeping watch.

In charge of this phase of work—seismology, earthquake and tsunami (tidal wave reporting)—is Rev. Bernard F. Doucette, a professional weatherman since before the war. Together with Fr. Depermann, the man who rebuilt the observatory, he inaugurated the seismology program in Baguio in 1952, and since that time earthquakes from various parts of the world—Chile, the Aleutian Islands, Lanao and Vigan—have been recorded on the instruments and reported to various world centers. The system, one of two Far East stations, has participated in the seismic sea-wave warning system

A privately-owned observatory on a hilltop in Baguio records movements of the earth and keeps track of sun's activities



REV. JAMES J. HENNESEY, director (right) and Rev. Paul B. Huggendobler, executive assistant.



electromagnetic waves. A flare on its surface occurring 93 million miles away, produces effects in the upper atmosphere which are picked up as radio noise to give evidence of some unusual sun activity. The data gathered about the sun's activities are used in radio communication which can be seriously affected by their occurrence. By knowing in advance what is happening in the atmosphere as a result of the sun's activities, radio stations on earth are able to prepare for the disturbance.

The Sights from the Rooftop

Father Hugendobler, who is an old man, stopped every now and then to rest as we walked around the hill to look at the various installations of the observatory, explaining at the same time how the gadgets worked. Father Hennessey is younger, tall and hefty and looks less of a weatherman than his assistant. He studied physics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and at Columbia University and was professor of physics at the Ateneo in 1935-38. He also headed the natural sciences department of Woodstock College in Maryland in 1943-46. He came back to the Philippines in 1947 and was at the head of the science department of the Sacred Heart College, Novaliches, in 1948-51. At present he is both the director of the observatory and head of its ionosphere division.

After a leisurely walk around the hill, the two took us to the roof of the building where a telescope is mounted and sheltered by a collapsible roof. From here one looks around and the whole of Baguio City is before his eyes. Northward, the eyes follow a winding ribbon that is the Naguilian road until it gets lost in the mountains, and as the gaze sweeps westward one catches a glimpse of the China Sea and the Ilocos coast. The telescope is used to take daily photos of the sun from which sunspot counts are made. In charge of this department is Rev. Richard A. Miller who was at the moment in the States directing the construction of a highly specialized piece of equipment known as a solar spectograph that will be installed on Loyola Heights upon its arrival this month.