

## Several Observe Mercury Transit in Philippines

Along with many other observers throughout the world, the astronomers of the Philippines participated in the timing of the transit of mercury over the sun. This is a phenomenon similar to the eclipse of the sun by the moon, except that mercury is so far away from the earth that it is seen only as a black dot or as a sun spot passing over the surface of the sun. This phenomenon takes place only about every ten years. Manila Observatory in Baguio City took three photographs of the transit, one at 8:05a.m., the next at 10:15 $\frac{1}{2}$  a.m. and the third, five minutes later. Astronomers are very interested in the exact time ~~when~~ when mercury just enters the solar disk and of the exact time when the planet leaves the solar disk. The diameter of mercury is a little ~~less~~ than one half that of the earth .

Visible on the films are the ~~sun~~spots on the sun. These are markings on the very surface of the sun. A few hundreds of years ago, astronomers thought that sunspots were the transits of unknown planets across the surface of the sun.

Father Miller, who took the pictures said that, like the moon, ~~mercury~~ <sup>may</sup> in relation to the earth, mercury always keeps the same face towards the sun.