

Astronomer Answers Queries About Planets, Eclipses, Spots

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Here are some questions which frequently come to me. Their answers will likely be of interest to many.

1. What is the very bright object in the eastern sky early in the evening, and the still brighter one in the southeast in the dawn?

These have been discussed frequently, but for those who missed the articles we can state that the evening object is the planet Jupiter, and the one in the morning sky is the planet Venus, the most brilliant of all planets or stars.

2. What eclipses will be visible during 1955?

I'm sorry to give such a discouraging answer, but this year will be very unspectacular for us in regard to eclipses. Not one will be visible in any of the states where this article will be published. There is a total solar eclipse on June 20, but this can be seen only from the vicinity

of Southern Asia. On December 14 an annular (not annual), or ring, eclipse of the sun will occur in about the same region. November 29 there will be a partial lunar eclipse, but the moon will set here before the event.

Some may ask, "What is an annular solar eclipse?" Such would be a total eclipse were the moon much closer to the earth on the date of occurrence. It would then hide the entire face of the sun. But at times during a month, old Luna is 30,000 miles farther from us than at others. It then looks somewhat smaller and will not quite cover the face of the sun. All is blacked out with the exception of a narrow ring of brilliant light around the outer rim of the sun. "Annular" means "ring."

3. We are told that sunspots are most numerous every 11.2 years, and that at such times magnetic disturbances and the aurora borealis, or northern lights, are most frequent. Where

are we now in the sunspot cycle? The last maximum of solar spottedness seems to have occurred in May, 1947. The time between maxima is not always 11.2 years, but if this average applies this time, the next should take place in 1958. Since the fall from maximum to minimum is generally slower than the rise from minimum to maximum, we are likely now about at a minimum. Some days the past few months not a single spot could be seen by telescopic means. At about the times of maximum many spots are always visible on the solar face.

4. When will brilliant Venus again grace the evening twilight? Not until next autumn. Venus will be a "morning star" until September 1 when it will pass behind the sun and get into the evening twilight. But it will be a few weeks later before it can be easily seen. It will be a nice Christmas star next December.

Register-Guard, Eugene, Ore.
Sun., Jan. 23, 1955 9A

U.S. Birth Rate Plagues Briton

Lord Simon Fears Overuse of Goods

By ROBERT MUSEL
Of The United Press

LONDON 22 — A distinguished member of the House of Lords says men and women in the United States are having too many babies.

The 2,800,080 bundles of joy that arrived in America during 1954 brought no joy at all to Lord Simon of Wythenshawe, who is concerned about how the world is going to clothe, feed and shelter its growing population.

"The United States is devouring the world's mineral and fuel reserves at an almost terrifying rate," he said. He believes America should cut down its birth rate, perhaps to the point of keeping its population steady, with births balancing deaths.

EXTENDED RESEARCH

Lord Simon, 75, is chairman of a committee which is drafting a report on population problems for a privately financed research group devoted to "political and economic planning." His committee has been working for 18 months.

"Is the West ethically justified in so rapidly consuming the means of existence? Ought we not rather to slow down or halt altogether the growth of western populations?" Lord Simon asked.

The more the West uses fuel and mineral reserves the less there will be for underdeveloped countries which, sooner or later, will be wanting them on a large scale, he warned.

THE MORAL QUESTION

Lord Simon declined to go into specific detail about his committee's findings until its report is published. It is understood the committee will report there is no "reliable" evidence to support the belief that food production can keep pace with a world population which is increasing at the rate of 70,000 a day.

The report also is expected to raise a moral question of whether people in one part of the world should increase their population, creating more mouths to feed, while people in another part of the world are alive and hungry.

In the past the "political and economic planning" organization has always been careful to recognize that proposals for limiting population may run counter to religious beliefs. But it is also known to hold the view that a stable world population is one way of ensuring food enough for all.

Forest Funds Set for Roads

The Willamette National Forest, with headquarters in Eugene, would receive some of the 24 million dollars which President Eisenhower asked Congress Monday to provide for the construction and maintenance of national forest roads and trails.

The \$24 million total is \$1½ million above that appropriated for these purposes last year, and would be available for the fiscal year beginning July 1.

The budget message said the increase is to provide the full amount authorized by the federal aid highway act of 1954. Existing systems of forest roads and trails throughout the nation consist of about 119,000 miles of earth and gravel-surfaced roads and 120,000 of supplemental trails.

Lloyd Bransford, forest engineer for the WNF, said Monday that the Willamette would receive part of the federal funds. There is no way to tell at this stage how much, however, he added.

The share the WNF receives when it is appropriated goes for new roads, bridges, and trails, and maintenance of these types of facilities.

He said WNF has about 900 miles of roads now. About 500 of these are good gravelled or earth roads, and about 400 are poor roads. There are about 2,500 miles of trails in the Willamette, he said.

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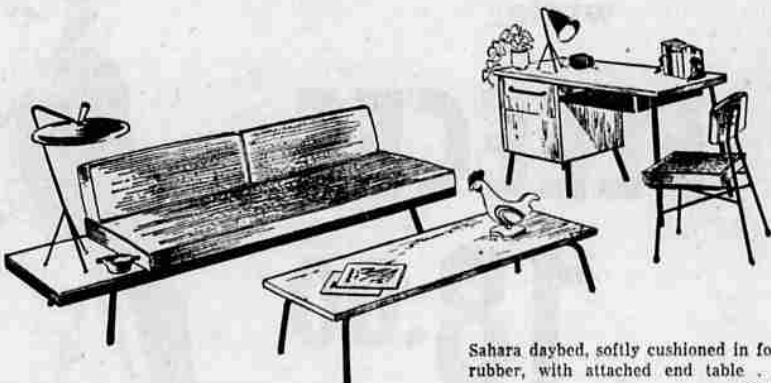
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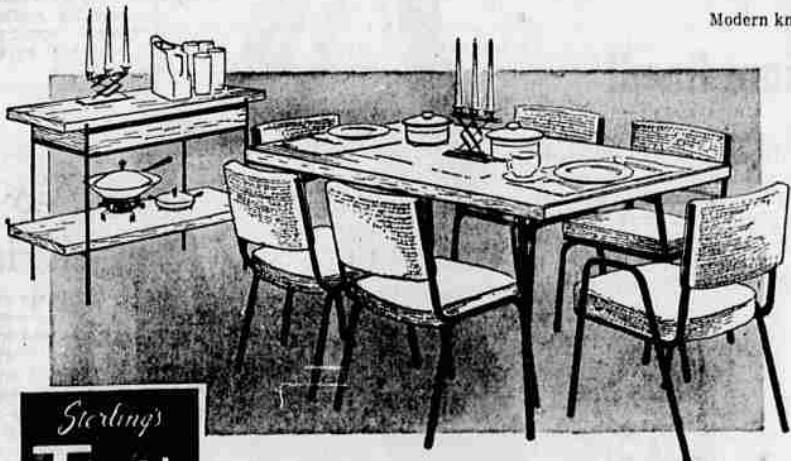
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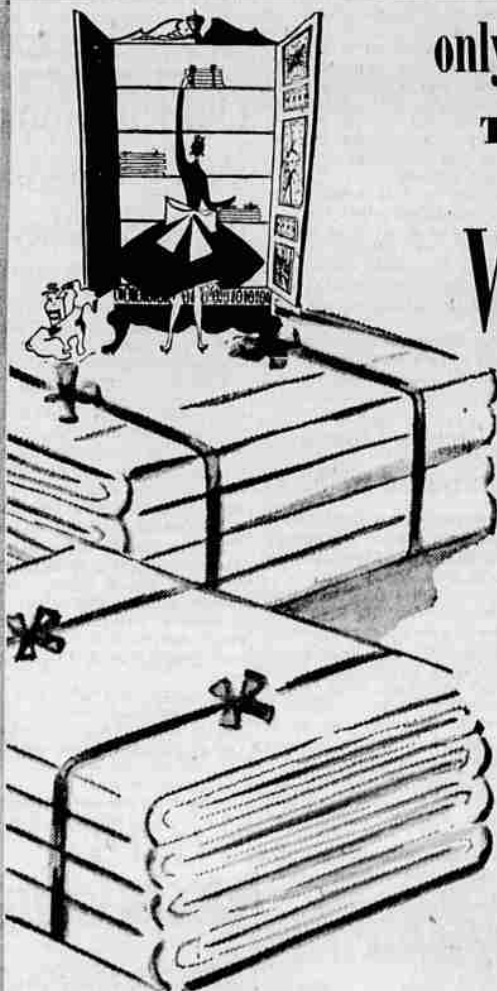
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