

polemics, not as a haven for poorly written short communications which would be more understandable and useful if written up in the normal format of a short article."

NAS Panel Asks Construction Of New Planetary Instruments

Ground-based planetary astronomers require new instruments to take advantage of new knowledge and new techniques, according to a special panel of the National Academy of Sciences. In a September report, the panel specifically recommended new radar and radio telescopes, a 120-inch infrared telescope, new Fourier interferometers and development of new radiation detectors for all regions of the spectrum from near ultraviolet to microwave.

The study was conducted by the Panel on Planetary Astronomy of the NAS Space Sciences Board; it was paid for by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. The report is a sequel to one on space exploration issued a month earlier (*PHYSICS TODAY*, October, page 65) that had urged more frequent planetary probes by relatively inexpensive spacecraft.

The latest report finds "little doubt that the most interesting discoveries in the planetary system will continue to result from space explorations in the form of probes, orbiters and landers." It continues, however: "Ground-based observations are often more effective and are almost always considerably less expensive than measurements made in space."

The report also calls for construction of a 60-inch optical telescope in the southern hemisphere to be used for planetary work; a world-wide photographic patrol of the planets through 1 Jan. 1974; greater efforts in astrometry, particularly of comets and asteroids; recovery of more extraterrestrial matter and more work in laboratory spectroscopy.

The panel suggests establishment of a national society for planetary sciences, possibly as an affiliate of an existing society.

The 17-man panel was headed by John S. Hall, director of Lowell Observatory. Copies of the report are available at \$3.50 each from the NAS Printing and Publishing Office in Washington. □

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