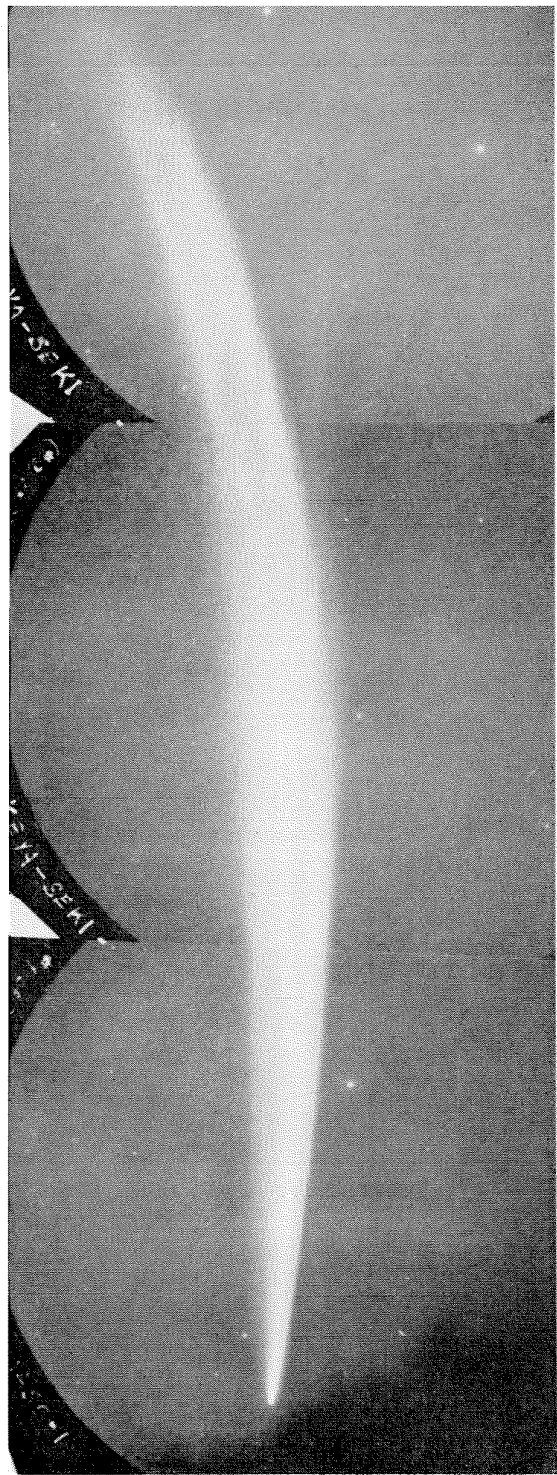
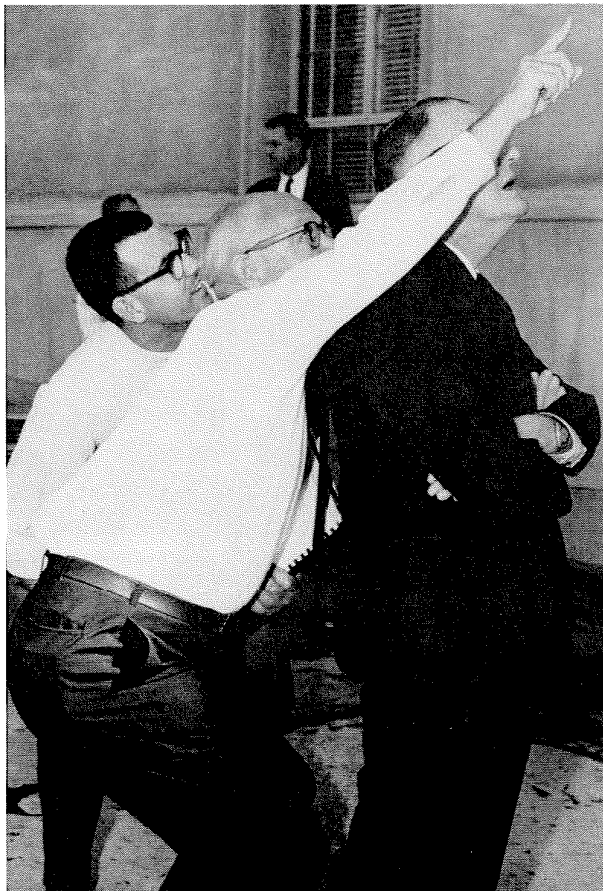


RARE VISITOR

Comet Ikeya-Seki, flying in from the edge of the solar system, made a sharp swing around the sun, reached its closest point to the sun on October 20, and headed again for outer space. The path of its orbit took it within 800,000 miles of the sun and afforded astronomers a rare chance to observe its flight through the solar corona at speeds approaching a million miles an hour. When the last comet of this kind appeared in 1887, scientists did not have the delicate instruments which were used this time to obtain valuable new information on the makeup of comets.



Ikeya-Seki, tail first, precedes the sun above the horizon at 4:30 a.m. on October 29, and is caught on film by the 18-inch Schmidt telescope at Palomar Observatory. The length of the tail at this time was 20 degrees.

Caltech students and faculty line up, on October 20, to watch Ikeya-Seki head into its solar "fly-by," from a prime observation spot on campus, in the shadow of Von Karman Laboratory.