

24 June, 1966.

Dr. B. G. Ballard

Don McKinley has sent me a copy of his memorandum to you on the organization of astronomy in Canada, and he has suggested that I might put on record my own thoughts in this matter.

From a logical point of view, the recommendation of the Glassco Commission to consolidate all federal astronomical research under NRC is certainly unassailable. However, one must be practical, and tidiness of the organizational chart is no guarantee for efficiency of operation and initiative of the scientists involved. On the basis of the same Glassco-Commission argument, one might also question the fact that we have two spectroscopy groups in Chemistry, two in Physics, and one that may be classed as spectroscopy in Radio and Electrical Engineering. Yet I think it would be a great mistake if one wanted to consolidate them all into one division in the interests of administrative tidiness.

I believe it is fair to say that the astronomers would not have got the Queen Elizabeth telescope if they had been at NRC. Since the DM and TS have had the initiative of persuading the Government to approve this great project, I can't really quite see how it can now be transferred to NRC. This is apart from all the other difficulties which Don McKinley mentioned. I agree with him that the question of the difference in qualifications need not worry us too much if a consolidation were made. However, I have a feeling that astronomy would very soon expand to be of the size of a whole division, considering the staff required for the Queen Elizabeth telescope and the associated institute on the U.B.C. campus.

It would, of course, be of interest to have some information about the feelings of the working astronomers, particularly at Victoria, with regard to consolidation. I have come across one or two incidents of dissatisfaction on their part with regard to administrative details which appear to be much more rigid in DM and TS than at NRC, but whether such complaints are sufficient for them to have a

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strong desire to be accepted by NRC, I do not know. Unless there were such a desire, I do not think that a transfer should be made simply by a Treasury Board decision.

If some consolidation is needed, one might consider to bring all Government radio astronomy into the Radio and Electrical Engineering Division of NRC, while leaving all optical astronomy with DM and TS. However, from a scientific point of view, there is no need for this since I understand that the cooperation between the Penticton Radio Observatory and REED is excellent.

G. Herzberg.

GH:ph

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