

Adjournment Debate

per cent of the operating time. These instruments are heavily used by university researchers from Canada and other countries. As well, NRC has many fine astronomers in its own right.

The Algonquin Radio Observatory consists of three instruments—a 46 metre fully steerable parabolic reflector, a compound solar interferometer and a small solar radio telescope. The large reflector was constructed over 20 years ago and needs major refurbishment so that it can operate at millimeter wavelengths. This reflector is also expensive to operate and some astronomers question the cost-benefit payoff from continuing to use the telescope as is.

Since an initial decision to proceed, the estimated cost of the refurbishment rose from \$7.9 million to \$11.7 million. In view of this, plans to refurbish the telescope have been cancelled. In the words of Dr. Kerwin, “We do not have the money and therefore we cannot resurface and therefore it becomes obsolete”. The Minister of State for Science and Technology (Mr. Oberle) had no role in directing the reductions toward the Algonquin Radio Observatory. NRC management took that decision.

As of now, no other decisions have been made. The facility will operate this winter, and further decisions may be made next summer. In addition, the NRC task group is reviewing NRC's decision on the telescope right now.

NRC, in consultation with Canadian astronomers, is looking at a variety of options for the Algonquin Radio Observatory. They want to give Canadians access to the best possible facilities within budget constraints. Alternative sources of funding are being sought which would permit the telescope to be operated at less cost to NRC. Ways of strengthening other facilities are being looked at so that some of the same services can be provided elsewhere. Finally, NRC is looking into obtaining increased access to existing observatories.

● (2125)

It is not a pleasant task to have to review existing operations and re-allocate resources. Nevertheless, if federal research efforts are to be focused on agreed priorities, priorities which have emerged after long and careful thought by all interested parties, then the issue must be faced squarely and appropriate decisions taken.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 3(1).

The House adjourned at 9.26 p.m.