

B. JOINT DISCUSSION

ON

THE ORION NEBULA

Tuesday 1 September 1964 at 14^h 00^m

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE: G. H. Herbig (Chairman), S. B. Pikelner, S. von Hoerner, G. Westerhout, K. Wurm.

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INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIRMAN

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the Joint Discussion on 'The Orion Nebula'. Historically, it is very appropriate that we discuss this subject at just this time because in a few months we observe the centenary of the discovery, by William Huggins with his small visual spectroscope, of the fact that the Orion Nebula is in reality a mass of emitting gas rather than a cloud of unresolved stars. In fact, you will be interested to know that it was 100 years plus just 3 days ago that Huggins and W. Miller anticipated that discovery by their initial observation of the N₁, N₂, and H β emission lines in the planetary nebula NGC 6543.

The nearness and the high surface brightness of the Orion Nebula, plus the fact that it is part of the great Orion complex of stars and nebulosity, has made it the target for many investigations over the years. We cannot hope to review these here. In fact we have not the time to do proper justice even to some of the very important recent work on the Nebula. But an effort has been made by the Organizing Committee to bring before this audience, largely of non-specialists, certain areas of activity which seem to be particularly significant as well as extremely active at the present time.