

Sighting by Chch couple

By SUZANNE KEEN

A Christchurch couple who believe they saw an unidentified flying object while on holiday in Australia say that they are not the type of people who "imagine little green men on Mars."

Mr Alan Parkes and his wife Tina, of Kaiapoi, had decided to take the scenic route from Mount Gambier to Melbourne last Saturday evening, but while they were driving along the coast road, the trip became a little more scenic than they had anticipated.

"My wife saw it first and drew my attention to it," said Mr Parkes. "There was a very bright, greenish-bluish object, rectangular in shape, and it seemed to be hovering on the horizon, at least 10 miles away."

"It was not any too exciting, I did not see any little green men jumping inside or anything like that."

On returning to Christchurch on Tuesday, the Parkes' had decided to keep the sighting quiet, only telling a few relatives and friends at work. However, after hearing reports on the radio of similar sightings in Australia during the last week, they decided there could be some connection.

"My first impression was that it was a ship, but I knew it couldn't have been that," said Mr Parkes.

"I immediately tried to justify what it was — the only other light in the sky was the very last glimmer of sunlight behind us, and it could not have been a reflection of anything else."

He said that there was other traffic on the road, as well as people fishing along the coast, and said he would feel much more comfortable if they had reported seeing the U.F.O. as well.

Mr and Mrs Parkes said that the object was not moving, but rather hovered in the same place for one to two minutes. The couple had done a lot of photography during their two weeks in Australia and were disappointed at missing the picture of a lifetime, because the road was too narrow and winding for them to park the car.

"It would have been very dangerous to stop, but now I wish I had done to get the photo. I thought it (U.F.O.) would still be there for a while — it did not actually disappear, it seemed to

fade away in a cloud."

Mr Parkes, a salesman at Whitcoulls, Ltd, won the trip to Australia for being the employee who sold the most printed ballpoint pens. His colleagues were more than slightly surprised by the story he had to tell on his return to work.

"The mouths hung open a bit when I told them about it."

The South Island director of the Mutual U.F.O. Network, Mr John Knapman, said there had been no report of U.F.O. sightings in New Zealand for several years.

He received about five reports from Australia in the mail yesterday, giving details of recent sightings in Queensland and said he was eager to talk to Mr Parkes.