

# **NOISE OF STRANGE PLANES HEARD AT DARWIN**

## **Mysterious Visitors From Timor Sea**

**DARWIN, February 9.**

**O**FFICIAL inquiries today established beyond reasonable doubt that two unidentified planes, flying in high and fast from the Timor Sea and disappearing in a south-westerly direction, were seen and heard over Darwin last week.

At 6 p.m. on Thursday, Mr P. Williams, an employee at the aerodrome, and Mr P. Love, a wharf labourer, were standing near a hotel in the centre of the town and saw a silver-grey machine pass high to the west of the town. The sound of the engines of the machine was heard by others.

At 4.30 a.m. yesterday the foreman of the Darwin electric power station, Mr M. Holtze, detected the sound of a high-powered engine and saw a large machine disappearing to the south-west. The plane showed only one light and this was an orange colour.

The reports have caused excitement in the town. They are too authentic to be ignored and no registered Australian planes—Government, commercial, or private—were within hundreds of miles of Darwin at the time the mysterious visitors were observed.

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About four months ago workmen engaged on the construction of the new water storage at Manton Gap, about 40 miles from Darwin, reported that a fast monoplane passed overhead shortly after sundown. The machine carried no lights or marks. At the time this report was discredited, but it was revealed today that subsequent inquiries resulted in a lengthy report being sent to the defence authorities.

Few people were out of bed and the town was practically in darkness when Mr Holtze observed the plane yesterday morning. It might easily have escaped notice but for the fact that its presence was betrayed in romantic fashion by the exhaust note of the Diesel engine used at the power house.

This engine develops about 1000 revolutions at the normal speed and Mr Holtze has observed that the presence of any other machine in the vicinity developing more or less than 1000 revolutions is reflected clearly in the exhaust beat of the power house engine.

At 4.30 a.m. yesterday Mr Holtze was attending the engine when he noticed a distinct change in the note of the exhaust. Accustomed to the departure of air mail planes from the local aerodrome about 5 a.m. on three mornings a week, he at first paid little attention to the antics of his unofficial sound detector. Then he realised that no machine was scheduled to leave Darwin on Tuesday morning. He went outside and saw a machine in the air.

### **MULTI-ENGINEED MACHINE ?**

"Believe me, there is no doubt about its being an aeroplane," said Mr Holtze this morning. "My engine tells no lies and I am positive that what I saw was an aeroplane. Darkness and the fact that the object was moving at a high speed made it impossible for me to get good view of the machine, but it seemed to be a multi-engined monoplane."

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Officials are of the opinion that it will be difficult to get a more reliable witness than Mr Holtze.

Mr Williams, who reported the presence of a strange plane on Thursday, said today that he could secure a number of other witnesses if necessary. Coloured a silver grey and apparently a high-powered machine, it was unmistakable.

During the last three months and particularly at the time when the so-called Japanese "fisheries training ship," Kakuio Maru, was in Darwin several residents claim to have seen mysterious lights over and near the town at night. At least two nations have bases near enough to send aircraft to Australia and back without refuelling. Palao, a Japanese pearling base in the mandated territory, is only 1200 miles from Darwin.

#### **R.A.F. PLANES STRAYED ?**

In an endeavour to unravel the mystery the authorities have been interested in a brief report received here of the big defence manoeuvres at Singapore. This report stated that the forces would be divided and one side would defend "an imaginary continental state 1200 miles south of Malaya."

It has been suggested that R.A.F. machines taking part in the preparations for this manoeuvre may have strayed as far south as Darwin.

When the incoming Qantas mail plane left Darwin for Brisbane this morning a test was made of the sound detection capabilities of the electric power house's Diesel which Mr Holtze claimed to have betrayed the presence of the strange plane yesterday.

The Qantas plane left the town on a somewhat similar course, and its presence could be plainly detected in the note of the Diesel engine's exhaust.

#### **OFFICIAL INQUIRIES TO BE MADE.**

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Inquiries will be made by the Minister for the Interior (Mr McEwen) on the report of a strange plane at Darwin. The Administrator (Mr Abbott) will be asked for a report. No official advice has been received by the Government.