

FRESH EVIDENCE

DARWIN 'PLANE SCARE.

Strange Lights Seen in the Sky.

DARWIN, February 10.

Although the latest attitude of the authorities suggests that they will not give full credence to the mystery 'plane's report until one of the ghost machines actually is produced for their inspection, fresh evidence of the visitors came to light to-day.

The Acting Superintendent of the Police, Inspector Lovegrove, informed the Administrator (Mr. Abbott) that at 4.30 a.m. on Tuesday he heard the sound of what appeared to be high-powered aircraft. This was the time at which the foreman of the electric power station, Mr. Holtze, stated very definitely he observed the machine fly overhead.

Additional evidence of a somewhat less concrete nature has come from a local postal official. He stated to-day that during night shifts at the telephone exchange recently he has seen strange lights moving across the sky. The lights were similar to those shown by aircraft.

Keen interest was shown yesterday by Air Vice Marshal Williams, who arrived from Melbourne, and flew on to Singapore this morning, to represent Australia at the official opening of the Singapore base. Interviewed, the Air Vice Marshall said that it would be impossible for him to form any opinion regarding the mystery 'planes' reports until he had received proper evidence. The matter would be

proper evidence. The matter would be left in the hands of the Air Board during his absence.

The Administrator has received several urgent inquiries from the Air Board and other Government departments. He has asked the local civil aviation officer, Mr. Allan Collins, to furnish him with a full report to-day, so that it may be forwarded immediately to the Air Board in Melbourne.

DOPE RING.

One explanation offered locally for the presence of unidentified aircraft is that an eastern opium ring might be smuggling dope into Australia by air. Little credence is attached to this suggestion by the authorities, however. With thousands of miles of uninhabited and unwatched coastline, Australia could be entered by dope runners in a much cheaper and safer way than by air.

If it achieves nothing more the mystery 'plane scare should at least galvanise the defence authorities into action at Darwin. To-day, at this—one of the major bases of Australia—there is not a single anti-aircraft gun installed. Concrete emplacements for this type of armament were completed several months ago at various strategic positions round the garrison and naval fuel tanks, but they remain mounted with weeds instead of guns. The site of the proposed R.A.A.F. base and aerodrome was surveyed 12 months ago, and tenders for the constructional work were submitted long before the end of last year. There is still no sign of a start on this work.