

THOSE MYSTIFYING

"FLYING SAUCERS" !

The laugh has been on the Cootamundra district in past times. Old hands here will recall the "ghost," alleged to have been seen frequently at night on the Cootamundra-Stockinbingal road. Later on, further out towards Temora, the "Springdale Tiger" was said to be roaming, and brave men went out in search, well armed. In the town of Cootamundra came the thrill, later, when a real lion got loose, killed a horse or two, scared sundry citizens, was ultimately fired at by a bank manager and by a commission agent, and finally—well scared itself!—rushed into the lion's cage brought by the attendant from the circus from which it had escaped. Other parts of Australia have had their unsolved mysteries and their exciting

realities; but from overseas there now come the Press reports of the "flying saucers" alleged to be passing over the American States for a dozen days or so, and over Canada last Wednesday, but upon which a Sydney professor threw some light on Monday of this week. The chairman of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, Mr. David Lilienthal, said they had nothing to do with atomic experiments. The Navy and Army also disclaimed responsibility for them. U.S. military aircraft ranged over Pacific coast areas without finding any of the objects. Jet planes had been added to the force of standard fighters standing by to take part in the chase. In South Dakota a national guard pilot already in the air

national guard pilot already in the air was ordered by radio to "run down" a silvery disc with a short tail which a resident of Sioux Falls said he saw shoot across the sky a few minutes before. The pilot flew in the direction reported, but radioed back that he could not find the disc. Twenty-two students at Sydney University on Tuesday saw "flying saucers" similar to those which had been reported in the United States and Canada. The students were taking part in an experiment conducted by Professor F. S. Cotton, Professor of Physiology, who declared later that the "objects" seen by the students were caused by the movement of red corpuscles pressing in front of the retina of the eye. Addressing the students, the professor drew attention to the cable messages reporting that hundreds of persons in many parts of the United States had reported having seen "flying saucers." He suggested that the students co-operate with him in experiments. They left the lecture room, and, before returning to the main building, carried out observations of the sky. Professor Cotton suggested that they look at the sky about a mile away, and concentrate their gaze on a fixed point while standing perfectly still. If they saw any objects corresponding to those set out in the cable reports, they should see him in the main medical school. Within 10 minutes 22 students reported that they had seen the objects described. As a further test Professor Cotton asked them to set on paper the objects they had seen, and also any remarks they

had seen, and also any remarks they wished to make. These indicated that they had seen objects which appeared to be oval; that they were bright; that they moved very rapidly; that they tended to move in the direction of the

long axis; and that there was a tendency for the path of motion to be curved. In some drawings the objects were seen following each other in line, in others they were disconnected, and in more they appeared to have short tails. The drawings, revealed three features which were published in cable reports for the first time on Monday some hours after the students had drawn their pictures. These were a silvery disc with a short tail; discs swinging in an arc; and discs resembling a string of flying pearls. Professor Cotton said on Monday night that the students had seen what he expected them to see. The objects "seen" by the students were really caused by "the effect of red corpuscles of the blood passing in front of the retina," he said. "This is well recognised." Professor Cotton stated that people acquainted with the red-cell phenomena might not normally trace the connection, because frequently the effects revealed large numbers of objects. In certain circumstances, however, when a person was looking at a blue sky with scattered clouds, only a

small number of objects was seen apparently darting across the blue spaces. This was because bright spots could not be seen against the background of

not be seen against the background of the clouds. "All I would add is that readers can now draw their own conclusions about the reports from overseas," added Professor Cotton.