

"FLYING SAUCER" WAS VENUS, SAYS PILOT

SYDNEY, Friday.—Captain Gordon Savage, the pilot who reported a "flying saucer" near Canberra this morning, said to-night he first thought it might be a Russian plane, but he is convinced now that red and white alternating lights he saw were phenomenon caused by the planet Venus rising on the horizon.

Capt. Savage and First Officer F. E. Hastilow were flying a DC3 freighter from Brisbane to Melbourne, and near Canberra were turning back to Sydney because Essendon was temporarily closed

when they saw lights to the east at 3.25 a.m.

In an official report to his company, First Officer Hastilow said the white light alternated at 15 seconds interval to a red light.

They were flying at 3000 feet, and the lights were above them, appearing some distance away and moving in the same northerly direction at a considerably faster speed.

Captain Savage climbed to 5000 feet to get a better look at the object, which drew away and eventually disappeared, but when the freighter's navigation lights were turned off the strange lights ahead reappeared.

Replying to a radio query from the freighter, Mascot control tower said no other plane was in the vicinity. Later Mascot tower picked up an unusual light in the east.

CONVINCED

Asked to-night why he had turned off his navigation lights, Captain Savage said: "At that time I was convinced it was some foreign object in the sky. I

foreign object in the sky. I thought it might be some other aircraft that did not want me to see him. I immediately thought of a Russian plane that might be having a look round our coastline. I turned towards it and tried to chase it, but it disappeared."

Captain Savage said he ruled out his first belief that the lights came from a planet, because he could see no other stars and believed the night to be cloudless. He later learned there was high cirrus cloud hiding the other stars, while Venus rose from the horizon "with a glare of light on a black background. It was impossible to tell the distance. I could only compare it with the aircraft navigation lights."

Captain Savage said he was sure for about two hours after he landed that he had seen "some foreign object." He was now quite satisfied that it was the planet Venus.

He had reported the object as a "flying saucer" for want of a better term. He did not believe in flying saucers.

SIMILAR CASE

First Officer M. Porteous, an A.N.A. pilot, said to-night he had logged a similar phenomenon about 5 a.m. on March 13, while flying between Ceduna and Adelaide, on the Perth-Adelaide run.

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There was a fantastic display of green and red alternating lights until the planet rose about 15 degrees above the horizon and the lights disappeared. It had been established as the planet Venus. The navigator was star shooting at the time and the planet was plotted.

No report on to-day's mystery has been made to the Department of Civil Aviation.

The department's acting superintendent of accident studies (Mr. W. L. Milne) said: "The last time I saw a flying saucer I was on my way home from a R.A.A.F. mess."
