

Pilot thought light was Russian plane

SYDNEY, Friday. — Captain Gordon Savage, pilot who reported a "flying saucer" near Canberra early this morning, said to-night that he first thought it might be a Russian plane.

But he is convinced now that the red and white alternating lights he saw were a phenomenon caused by the planet Venus rising on the horizon.

Captain 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 the lights to the east at 3.25 a.m.

Tried to chase it

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

Captain Savage said to-night that at the time he was quite convinced it was some foreign object in the sky.

"I immediately thought of a Russian plane that might be having a look round our coastline," he said. "I turned towards it and tried to chase it, but it disappeared."

Captain Savage said 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.

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The Civil Aviation 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."

"Couldn't be Venus"

Officials at Mount Stromlo Observatory, Canberra said that the pilot could not have mistaken the planet Venus for a light in the sky.

At the time they reported seeing the "phenomenon" Venus would just have risen on the eastern horizon. The weather in the area was heavily overcast.