

Flying saucer tales in Britain "all ballooney"

LONDON, Tuesday: Two flying saucers seen recently near London were meteorological balloons.

Mr. Nigel Birch, Under-Secretary for Defence, said this in the House of Commons today.

He had been asked what reports his department had received of the flying object seen by two airmen over London or other parts of Britain, and reported to him.

Mr. Birch said that two experimental meteorological balloons were observed at different times on November 3— one by two officers in a RAF plane, the other by a member of Anti-Aircraft Command.

"There was nothing peculiar about either of these occurrences," he said amid laughter.

Replied to further questions, he said the meteorological balloons were fitted with a special device to produce a large echo on a radar screen.

A member suggested that the RAF and Anti-Aircraft Command should be warned when these balloons were up so that they "really known what is happening and do not create unnecessary alarm in other quarters."

"That is where the trouble arose," said Mr. Birch. "The two balloons in question were allowed to escape, or were let off at unusual times. But I hope we shall have no more trouble about it."

Last Tuesday the War Office said an anti-aircraft unit in South-East London had picked up a signal on

had picked up a signal on its radar screen, and followed the track of an "object" which appeared to be "circular or spherical, and white."

The report said the object was also seen through a telescope by men of the same unit on the same day, November 3.

An Air Ministry spokesman said all reports of possible "saucers" were investigated, but in 95 per cent of cases there was a natural explanation.

They were either meteorites, or reflections of sunlight or moonlight on aircraft. But in the remaining cases there was no explanation.—AAP.
